VOL. I NO. 2 JUNE, 1952

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the s.udy of Tamiliana

2901

THE SURVIVAL OF TAMIL CULTURE — The Editor 97

THE THEORY OF POETRY IN TOLKAPPIYAR — T. P. Meenakshisundaram 104

TAMIL CULTURE IN THIRUVALLUVAR — A. C. Paul Nadar 114

QUOTABLE QUOTES — 123

ASOKA AND THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM IN CHERANADU — P. C. Alexander 125

THE TAMILS TURN SINHALESE — Swami Gnana Prakasar 132

SOME DRAVIDIAN LOAN-WORDS IN ENGLISH — C. R. Myleru 143

THE EPIC ON THE ANKLET — Margabandhu Sarma 154

THE LINGUISTIC AREA OF TAMIL NAD — K. Ramamurthy 163

TAMILIANA — NEWS AND NOTES 171

All Rights Reserved

Rs. 5 yearly

TAMILOLOGY

The Tamil Plutarch by Simon Casie Chitty: A Summary account of the lives of the poets and poetesses of Southern India and Ceylon with notes by T. P. Meenakshisundaram. The book contains several verses translated into English. 2 - 12 - 0

Pattupattu, *or* The Ten Idylls.
Translated into English verse by J. V. Chelliah.

A fluent rendering of ancient classics illustrating the tenor of Tamil life. Indispensable also to students of History.
4 - 4 - 0

Tamil Literature, by M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, One of the very few books in English which attempts a survey of Tamil Literature up to modern times. 4 - 4 - 0

The Song of the Cuckoo and other poems by H. Jesudasan: contains translations of some of Bharathi's poems.
2 - 8 - 0

THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK CENTRE,
TAMIL LITERATURE SOCIETY,
52, NEW COLONY,
TUTICORIN,
S. INDIA.

VOL. I NO. 2 JUNE 1952

TAMIL CULTURE

A Quarterly Review dedicated to the study of Tamiliana

The Survival of Tamil Culture

THE EDITOR

THE DISINTEGRATION and disappearance of dominant cultures is one of the most painful observations in the study of history.

> They say the Lion and the Lizzard keep
> The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep.

A sense of sadness and regret comes over the student of culture that walks among the ruins of Sumer or Akkad or Crete or Athens, and realises that men could have altered the course of history. The disappearance of cultures is not explained by a blind and predetermined cyclic process as Otto Spengler attempted to prove in his book on the Decline of the West. While it is true that a culture may not be produced artificially or developed according to a pre-conceived plan, it is no less true that the rational and spiritual elements in a culture are those that determine its creative activity, and these are contributed by the mind of man. It is in the power of men to contribute the causes and work at those conditions necessary for a flowering of culture, and it is also in the power of men to combat those intellectual errors and the emotional prejudices which stand in the way of such conditions. The survival as well as the growth of Tamil Culture is, therefore, in our own hands.

There need be no fear that the growth of Indian or Ceylonese national unity, or even the spread of a world culture threatens the survival of the culture of the Tamils. If the culture of India and Ceylon is to have an organic and natural

development in the future, it will be in the interest of these countries to promote a culture which has been basic and is at the roots of their history, and to foster the language and the literature that has been responsible for the preservation of that culture. If the growth of separate regional cultures in Wales, in Scotland, in Ireland have been argued to be necessary for the development of English Culture, with how much more justification may it not be stated that any attempt to interfere with the language, the literature, and the way of life of the millions of Tamils or to weaken their culture by questionable politico-economic methods would spell ruin for that wealth, vitality and diversity which have been characteristic of culture in our parts of the world.[1]

From that dawn of history when Dravidian religious, ethical, and material elements entered Vedic and post-Vedic civilization and made a cultural conquest not unlike the classical one related by Horace,

> Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artes
> Intulit agresti Latio.

to the present day when Tamil artisans from Tanjore create Beauty with stone and chisel at the Dalada Maligawa and the edifices of the Ceylon University, the Tamil contribution to other cultures has been consistently considerable. Since a healthy diversity is necessary in a unity for the development of culture, any attempt in India or Ceylon to impose the tyranny of one language, one outlook, one way of life would be tantamount to the negation of culture, and would result in the failure that like experiments have encountered in our generation in Italy and Germany. Even in a country like Malaya where the Tamil speaking people form a minority, the conservation of Tamil culture will strengthen the future development of the Federation. It is this belief that has made the University of Malaya organize a department of Tamil Studies and South Indian culture. It is the unimaginative statesman that aims at the tyranny of a rigid uniformity and

---

[1] Christopher Dawson, *Progress and Religion*, p. 117, ff ; London, 1945

embraces the view that any culture incompatible with his own should be forcibly uprooted.

Nor is it reasonable to fear that dominant cultures like Tamil, and a fortiori, satellite cultures, would cease to exist before the advance of a future world culture. T. S. Eliot has stated very clearly what the reaction of a student and lover of culture would be to the evolution of a world culture such as is envisaged by the promoters of a world state and a world government. "We can only conceive it (world culture) as the logical term of relations between cultures . . . It must follow from what I have already pleaded about the value of local cultures, that a world culture which was simply a *uniform* culture would be no culture at all. We should have a humanity de-humanised. It would be a nightmare".[2]

Tamil culture far from being absorbed in a world culture would receive from it opportunities for growth and for service. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation has thus defined its objectives :

1. To develop and maintain mutual understanding and appreciation of the life and culture, the arts, the humanities, and the sciences of the peoples of the world, as a basis for effective international organisation and world peace.

2. To co-operate in extending and in making available to all peoples for the service of common human needs the world's full body of knowledge and culture, and in assuring its contribution to the economic stability, political security, and general well-being of the peoples of the world.

The activities of the international body have been said to be vague and impractical, and such observations are probably due to the new ideas that the organisation has introduced in the educational and cultural field. It is certainly giving an orientation unemphasised before by educators. Doctor Ananda Coomaraswamy realised the need to establish world unity and understanding on a knowledge of the culture, literature, and the spiritual achievements of peoples, and he advocated that norms of conduct should be taken not only from Greek and Latin classics, but also from Tamil, from Arabic, from Persian

[2] T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, p. 62, London, 1951.

and from Chinese. The Unesco up to now has not turned its thoughts to Tamil, but we fervently hope it will. The lover of Tamil culture is not concerned so much about a possible weakening or inadequate recognition of Tamil culture, as about the world neglecting or losing a most precious heritage.

* * * * *

The manner in which Tamil culture has resisted all attempts at being absorbed by alien cultures argues an inherent vitality which strikes the student of culture as a most remarkable phenomenon. By the usual laws of change known to history there were periods when the Tamils and their culture should have been so absorbed as to have lost their identity; when their language should have been so changed as to have lost its original structure, and should have been so Sanscritized as to create today controversies regarding its origins and its classification. The advent of the Aryans, the activities of the Jains and the Buddhists, the patronage of exclusive classes by Tamil kings, an exaggerated appreciation and imitation of foreign styles and modes, the conquest of the Tamil country by European nations, all these events brought in their wake a number of trends unfavourable to the organic growth of the culture of the Tamils. But every period of danger was marked by a reaction in favour of maintaining its purity and identity, and thus has Tamil Society reached its present stage with its own system of values and its own cultural ethos.

In the relations between a given culture and contemporaneous cultures, there are always two forces in action, the force of attraction and the force of repulsion. Especially in our age is contact with other cultures a source of new strength and inspiration. Even those influences mentioned above which occasioned a struggle for survival, eventually served to enrich Tamil culture because Tamil society had the vitality to react in time and assimilate foreign elements of worth into its organism without any danger to its identity. The force of repulsion too, paradoxically enough, is one of the most creative forces in the realm of culture. It is friction that produces the

spark, and it is danger that augments the instinct of self-preservation. There are enough causes today for Tamil Society to be constantly vigilant, and vigilance is as much the price of culture as of liberty.

When we compare the state of the Tamil language and literature and Tamil way of life fifty years ago with their present state, we see many encouraging signs to show that we are witnessing the beginnings of a great revival. It has been usual to attribute this revival to the great patriot and poet, Subramaniya Bharathi. While we are willing to ascribe to him the chief influence in the reawakening of a national and political consciousness among the Tamils, and new trends in Tamil poetry, the literary and cultural revival, we feel, should be traced to another source.

Just as the popularization of the classics of Greece and Rome and the study of the origins of European Culture occasioned the Renaissance, so too the popularization through print of the Cangam works and the classical epics of the subsequent epochs are responsible for the new life that is manifest in Tamil letters, and the new interest shown in Tamiliana.

To no single man would it be possible to attribute the beginnings of this Renaissance. It is a movement towards the success of which many outstanding men have contributed their share; religious revivalists like Ramalinga Adigal, Arumuga Navalar, and Vedanayagam Pillai; scholars like Meenakshisundaram Pillai, Sundaram Pillai and V. P. Subramania Mudaliyar; editors like C. Y. Thamothiram Pillai and Swaminatha Aiyer; writers like Maraimalai Adigal and Thiru V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar, interpreters in English like Kanagasabai Pillai and Dr. Pope. This movement has created a deep interest in the roots and origins of Tamil Culture; it has been responsible for the eschewing of superfluous words and phrases of Sanscrit origin which were introduced in Tamil vocabulary during periods when Sanscrit was considered "the language of the gods", and Tamil thought to be an inadequate medium of expression. This movement has caused a revival of interest in Tamil Music (இசைத்தமிழ்) in Tamil dances and in Tamil drama. In brief, it has made the

Tamil conscious of his past, and that is the happiest augury for the future since the future should be well rooted in the past.

In the realm of poetry, this is Bharathi's age, but very little of genuine poetry has been produced since his death. Tamil prose reveals the signs of conscious attempts by writers to make it the medium of expression of modern thought and literary criticism. The output has been prolific in certain sections of Tamil prose, but depth, vigour, strength and character have not been its noteworthy features. Arthur Clutton-Brock said some years ago "The English Plato is yet to be". So too the Tamil Newman, the Tamil Hilton, the Tamil Cronin, and even the Tamil Tagore are yet to be.

* * * * *

The survival as well as the positive growth of Tamil Culture is happily based on the study of the past of the Tamils. The present revival is bound to be yet fruitful in proportion to the study that the Tamils themselves are able to make of their own language, their own literature and their own culture. For the maintenance as well as for the transmission of a culture there is no safeguard more reliable than language, and no means better suited than the family. It is in the family that the earliest and also the permanent attitude towards a culture is developed. Hence in bi-lingual areas an effort should be made in Tamil homes to teach the mother-tongue in all its purity, and inculcate the finer and nobler elements of the Tamil heritage.[3]

---

[3] The following lines about satellite cultures from T. S. Eliot, o.c., p. 54, may stimulate thought in those that advocates indiscriminate bi-lingualism. "The unmistakable satellite culture is one which preserves its language, but which is so closely associated with, and dependent upon, another, that not only certain classes of the population, but all of them, have to be bi-lingual. It differs from the culture of the independent small nation in this respect, that in the latter it is usually only necessary for some classes to know another language; and in the independent small nation, those who need to know one foreign language are likely to need two or three: so that the pull towards one foreign culture will be balanced by the attraction of at least one other. A nation of weaker culture at different periods: a sure satellite culture is one which, for geographical and other reasons, has a permanent relation to a stronger one."

The many Tamil festivals, lectures and conferences that are becoming popular in the Tamil country are promoting a very welcome enthusiasm. But enthusiasm can be short-lived unless it springs from intellectual convictions. Such convictions are formed by study, by the cultural climate in the family, and by an understanding of that 'perfection', and that "sweetness and light" that culture bestows on the individual and on society.[4] It is because of persons endowed with such "perfection" that life is livable. To quote the Tamil sage :

> *பண்புடையார்ப் பட்டுண்டு உலகம் அது இன்றேல்*
> *மண்புக்கு மாய்வது மன்*

[4] *Cf.* Mathew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy.*

The Theory of Poetry in Tolkappiyar

T. P. MEENAKSHISUNDARAM, M.A., B.L., M.O.L.

TOLKAPPIYAM

Tolkappiyam is the earliest book, now available in Tamil, not only on grammar but on all the fields of Tamil language and literature—orthography, phonetics, phonology, morphology, entomology, syntax, semantics, prosody, and rhetoric, all of which can be brought, in modern times, under Linguistics and Poetics. Many of Tolkappiyar's rules, as pointed out by his commentators, have lost their force by the time of the Cankam literature, now extant, and it is, therefore, assumed to be a book anterior in time to the latter, giving one a picture of the Tamil country of the few centuries before the Cankam Poems. According to the tradition, whilst the anthologies under discussion, belong to the Third Cankam, *Tolkappiyam* goes back to the Second Cankam, the master of Tolkappiyar, the sage Agastiya, having had a place in the First Cankam. But it is curious to find the same anthological character of literature emphasised by Tolkappiyar himself. The theory of poetics, adumbrated in his work, implies the very kind of anthology, based on something like the Cankam tradition. It gives in detail elaborate rules for describing the individual moments not in any connected narrative verse of epic grandeur, but in separate unconnected lyrical stanzas. It makes, it is true, a passing reference to old stories (Tol) and new stories (virurtu) but this may, after all, refer to old themes and new themes, treated in distinct dramatic songs.

This article is the continuation of the "The Theory of Cankam Poetry," in *Tamil Culture*, Vol. I. no. I.

Its Prosody

The Ceyyul Iyal or the chapter on literary composition in *Tolkappiyam* is really a treatise on prosody. Tolkappiyar's conception of a verse is such as to give us his theory of poetry we are in search of. The very first Cutram enumerates the various constituents of a verse as its organs : (1) the alphabetical sounds (Eluthu); (2) their duration (Mattirai); (3) their knitting together into syllable (Acai); (4) the various permutations and combinations of these syllables as feet (cir); (5) the varied integrations of these feet into lines (Ati); (6) the caesura—the coincident with the metrical and grammatical pause (yappu); (7) the lexical tradition (marapu); (8) the basic poetic intonations or fundamental poetic tunes (Tukku); (9) the innumerable garland like patterns of metrical weldings such as assonance and rhyme (Totai); (10) the import or the purport of the verse, controlling and vivifying all these parts, so as to make them expressive of the self same purport (Nokku); (11) the basic verse patterns as so many permanent and natural sound configurations of the language of the idiom of the language (pa); (12) the length or dimensions (Alavu); (13) the harking back to the ideal behaviour patterns of an ennobling humanity (Tinai); (14) their varying main currents of activity (kaikol); (15) the speaker (kurru) whose expression is the poem ; (16) the person to whom the poem is spoken (Ketpor) ; (17) the place (Kalan) and (18) time of the poem (Kalam); (19) the resulting effect or purpose of the verse (payan); (20) the sentiment or emotion bubbling forth there ; (21) the elliptical construction or the yearning after completion of the sense, at every stage of its progress (Eccam); (22) the context making clear the meaning (Munnam); (23) the underlying universality (Porul); (24) the Ford in the poetic current where the particularity enters into the flow of poetry or the particularity of the poetic aspect of the verse (Turai); (25) the great linkings or the retrospective and prospective constructions (Mattu); (26) the colour or the rhythm of the verse (Vannam); and (27) the eightfold poetical facades (Vanappu). These twenty-

seven are thus enumerated as the organs of a verse or a literary composition.

The Simile of a Body

At first sight, this appears to be a confusing and perplexing conglomeration. Looking deeper into this enumeration, one finds therein, the organic theory of poetry taking shape and form. There is the age long Tamil simile that verse is like the living body of a man. The sound and meaning together form one united whole. The bone, the marrow, the hair, the tooth, the mucus and their varieties of cells make up the body of man ; one has to add to these the various mental conditions and other vital constituents of life, known and unknown—in short all the physical, the chemical, the biological, the psychical and the spiritual hierarchies, rising as tiers, one over the other, but all woven into a beautiful unity by Nature—all these go to make up the personality of man. Everything there subserves the higher purpose of this personality, and finds a significance and meaning therein. Even a change in a tiny invisible cell, for instance, of a gland affects the pattern, though the organism may continue to live. So do the various parts of the verse go to make up its individual specific pattern and life.

The Music of Poetry

Some of the constituents of the verse, like the letters, their duration, the syllables, the feet, the garland like weldings, the lines, and intonations are elaborations of our phonetic experiences, whilst the resulting sound configurations, the rhythms, the dimensions, and the poetic tunes are prosodic elaborations of such an experience. All these hypnotise the reader, by their basic poetic music, and make him, move and heave with the poem. He stands enchanted, believing in the subject matter and becoming one with it, carried away by the multitudinous concatenations of canorous sounds of varying durations, modified by breaths frictions, trillings liquids hard and soft explosions, enriched by oral and nasal resonances,

and divided into happy collocations of significant and natural syllabic pulsations, which in their flow by their permutations and combinations, form into various waves of feet, which in their turn move with the poetic mood, by their very force of movement fastening themselves into varying patterns of wreaths or eddies of differing directions and angles of assonance and rhyme, the multifarious dispositions of these lines, giving rise, on this poetic march to varied and variegated poetic tunes, resulting in basic poetic configurations of differing rhythms of many a hue and many a facade.

AUDITORY IMAGINATION

The heading of this paragraph is of Dr. Elliot's coming, and what he says in this connection in his *Use of Poetry*, therefore, throws more light on this conception of what he calls auditory imagination. "It is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word, sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin, and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings certainly or not without means, in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality."

THOUGHT WAVES

The other organs of the verse like the meaning made clear by the context, the elaborate ramifications by allusions and suggestions glowing into life, by sweet remembrances as described at length by Prof. Richards, the lexical traditions of words and their significance, the elliptical construction or the yearning for the predicate after every pause in the continuous flow of the sense making the whole a continuity, and the retrospective and prospective constructions as looking backward and forward to bring about a well knit organised unity are but ordinary grammatical themes. These are the various ways in which the reader's understanding of a poem and his

usual grasp of the meaning are utilised for swaying his mind hither and thither, his mind, thereby, heaving up with the crest of the poetic wave, and ebbing, away with its trough, and his hypnotised intellect, resonating with the music and meaning of the poem, and thereby, becoming one with the theme.

Life of the Poem

The remaining constituents of the verse are its Speaker, the persons addressed, the time and place, the effect, the sentiment, the generality, particularity and universality of the poem, the last head reminding us of Jung's "archetypes and the unconscious racial and individual memories." These are all what one is accustomed to consider under the head of meaning and subject matter. These form the poetic theme in its concrete and specific reality, vivified by its glowing emotion, appealing to every heart by its universal or archetype, becoming of momentous value, as the expression of a fundamental mode of intrinsically ennobling human behaviour, its value carrying with itself the imprimatur of personal experience. The value of a work of art, as Read suggests, consists not merely in the progressive organisation of impulses for freedom and fullness of life (according to Richards), but also of the open recognition of a moral sanction which is, in the old phraseology, revealed to the artist. The eight fold facades and the import of the parts are attempts at telescoping these various strata of poetry, *viz.*, the sound, the music, the significance, its sweep and development the emotion, and the final experience. Everything, thus, appears to be of *great importance in the final make up of the poetic* personality of the verse, reflecting the personality of the poet. For, as Newman has said, "Literature is the personal use or exercise of language. Language itself, in its very origination, would seem to be traceable to individuals. Their peculiarities have given it, its character. We are often able in fact, to trace particular phrases or idioms to individuals. We know the history of their use. Slang, surely, as it is called, comes of and breathes of the personal. The connection between the

force of words in particular languages and the habits and sentiments of the nation speaking them, has often been pointed out. And while the many use language, as they find it, the man of genius uses it, indeed but subjects it, withal to his own purposes and moulds it, according to his own peculiarities. The throng and succession of ideas, thoughts, feelings, imaginations, aspirations which pass within him, the abstractions, the juxtapositions, the comparisons, the discriminations, the conceptions which are so original in him, his views of external things, his judgments upon life, manners, and history, the exercise of his wit, of his humour, of his depth, of his sagacity, all these innumerable and incessant creations, the very pulsation and throbbing of his intellect, does he image forth, to all does he give utterance in a corresponding language, which is as multiform as this inward mental action itself and analogous to it, the faithful expression of his intense personality, attending on his own inward world of thought, as its very shadow ; so that we might as well say that one man's shadow is another's as that the style of a really gifted mind can belong to any but himself. It follows him about as a shadow. His thought and feeling are personal and so his language is personal." This is quoted in extenso, since it explains the personality of the language of an age as well as the personality of a poem and its author. This digression apart, *Tolkappiyam* emphasises the fact the spirit and form of a poem, thus, become an indissoluble unity—a tadatmya or advaita relationship.

Dramatic Moments not Dramas

In time, it may be necessary, to explain the implications of some of these constituents. Perhaps, in explaining the ancient Tamil Idioms of *Tolkappiyam* in modern critical terms, we are trying to fit in round pegs into square holes. But, at this point, it is sufficient to note, that every poem is expected to be spoken by one, addressed to some other, at a particular place and time, inspired by an urge or purpose, and resulting in an effect, the whole speech being aglow with a living major sentiment or emotion or feeling. The French Classical Theorists insisted on the three unities of action, time and

place. This poetry, as described in *Tolkappiyam,* contemplates. not only these unities. but also the unity of all these trinities within the unity of a poetical moment of one dramatic speech, and no more. That this interpretation is correct, is further confirmed by the various chapters in *Tolkappiyam* on Akam, Puram, Kalavu and Karpu, all of which give a series of illustrative rather than exhaustive poetic situations, where the dramatic persons may give expression to their lyrical feelings. In short, every poem is conceived as a dramatic speech.

Absence of Drama

It is, therefore, passing strange that this does not give rise to the growth of any dramatic literature. It is not, there is no drama in that age ; there are the actors (Porunars) the dancers ; and the Cankam poems speak of Puranic or mythological scenes painted on the walls. Their folk dramas, however, have not developed any literary and permanent form. Dramatic movements and verses do not add up to a drama. That is why there is not a single drama coming from any Cankam poet. It may be, their theory of poetry, stood in their way of handling the folk drama in a poetic way. Perhaps the paintings and dances of the Cankam age are themselves but a series of poetic situations, portrayed and-acted without any attempt at hinting, the passage of time. Art becomes a geometrical symmetry not a rhythmic flow, a composition in space rather than in time ; it has its situations, as Monsieur Thibaudet in distinguishing the drama from the novel points out, composed not disposed. The Cankam theory of paintings of situations always restricted to particular scene may have influenced the theory of poetry. Perhaps, all these expressions of various arts, follow the same theory of situations. Reference may be made to the eleven great classical dances of the Cankam age.

The Dances

The eleven ancient dances of Tamil land steep our minds with a flash of an action and no more. Of the eleven,

six were by Sir Krishna. Out of the six, five relate to his strategic war against Vanacuran. Vanan imprisoned Krishna's grandson Anirudha when found in his palace, having been brought there by Vanan's daughter madly in love with him. To get him released Indrani, Lakshmi, Manmada and Krishna, to mislead the people of the City, danced separately in that city in the form of an enchanted image (Pavai by Lakshmi) or in the form of comic figures like an Eunuch (Petu by Manmada) or pot dancer (Kutam by Krishna) or gate dancer (Kataiyam by Indrani). In the end came the more serious and mortal dance of wrestling (Mal by Krishna) in which Vanan was killed. Alli, unconnected with this episode, is the dance where Krishna, by breaking away its tuck as though it were a lily danced over the elephant, sent against him by Kamcan. Lord Siva along with his concert, danced to bring about the extinction of the acuras (Kotti). He also danced over the victory he achieved by burning to ashes the three castles in the air (Pantarangam). Lord Murukan with the parasol, bent so as to form a screen, danced on the battlefield when the acuras took to their heels, and again after the victory, he danced the drum dance, along with the seven virgins (Tuti). Durga the goddess of war and victory danced the dance of the Measuring vessel, making it roll over and crush the acuras, when they, to beguile their enemies, assumed the forms of serpents and scorpions. Each one of these represents a particular situation rather than a movement of a story. These remind us of the most primitive form of tragedy as preserved, for instance, in Aeschylus. Referring to this, Prof. Murray says, "There is one great situation in which the poet steeps our minds with almost one or two sudden flashes of action passing over it—woman pursued by the lust of unloved man the saviour of mankind nailed externally to the rock, the suspense of great people expecting and receiving the news of defeat in war, the agony of a beseiged city—these are all the kind of subject that might be treated in a simple choral dance with nothing but words and music". Whatever the case may be, it is clear, the poetic theory of *Tolkappiyam* contemplates occasional verses and not any continuous narrative poem or epic.

Kovai and Malai

The occasional poems could have been collected as portraying a series of situations of love or war, in their temporal order. The compositions can be disposed to form a rhythmic flow of time. Such a thing has happened in Irayanar Akapporul and the innumerable Kovais are the results. Kovai is also a collection but a peculiar collection, representing a garland or a necklace of pearls, where in the overflowing time pattern, shines inside the separate poems, as the connecting string, and gives the required unity to the whole collection. Kacciappar the author of *Tanikai-p-puranam,* on the basis of the *Tolkappiyam* rules, has woven together the love story of Valli into a beautiful drama. The war poems can also be narrated as a succession of situations enumerated in *Tolkappiyam* by collecting together the poems of dramatic speeches and arranging them in such a way as to assume temporal pattern and rythm. *Purapporul Venpamalai* of the latter day, gives us an example of a pioneer work in that field. Again, Kacciappar in his *Tanikai-p-puranam,* in its narrative of the war with a Curapanman has successfully effected this stringing together of the poetic war situations, enumerated in *Tolkappiyam,* as a continuous narrative. The other Tamil poets, also, whenever they come to sing of war, attempt the same task on a smaller scale.

A later Cankam Anthology

Something like this has been done, even with reference to the Cankam poetry. The literary work called "*Takatur Yattirai*" — the March to Takatur — describing the advance of the Cera army on Takatur the Capital of the Chieftain of the age and the Patron of Learning. Atikaiman, the siege following that march, and the resulting war, is in reality a collection of the occasional verses sung by the two great Cankam poets, Aricilkilar and Ponmutiyar, on the various poetic situations of that war, arranged by some later day scholar on the pattern of successive events of a war. The poems of Cankam age are, thus, capable of being- arranged

so as to suggest a narration of successive events of a connected story of love or war.

THE ABSOLUTE

Therefore, the most important fact is that this is not attempted by those responsible for the Cankam Anthologies, people contemporaneous more or less with the poets. The prevalent theory of poetry of the age, stands against any such artificial collection, artificial in the sense it goes against the nature of their unique occasionalism. If any such thing is attempted, it robs the poems of their independent and individual poetic significance. Each poem is a chink in the wall of its individuality giving the glimpse of the whole universe. It is a beautiful dew drop reflecting the whole of the heavens and the earth from its individual point of view, its coign of vantage. To make this universal vision shrink into a point, on the line of a narrative verse is to murder its poetry. Many a gem of purest ray serene may be hidden in the sea of experience, and many are the hidden ways of the subtle artists, working on these valuable gems. Many like the epic poets are great in weaving beautiful patterns, immortalised in the pearl necklace of a Queen or in the diamond diadem of a King — the varying dispositions of the many faceted gems satisfying the varying tastes and vanities of the rich. Some like the Cankam poets are great in carving out glistening and living forms of the Divine Dance (Ratna Sabhapati) or the Female Beauty, in each individual gem, infusing and vivifying the dead stone, with their life breath and mystical vision, making it, in short, the Absolute. How can this Absolute be reduced to the relative in a pattern ?

Tamil Culture in Thiruvalluvar

A. C. PAUL NADAR, B.A., B.L.

Thiruvalluvar is the greatest name in Tamil literature. His poem *Thirukkural* is a masterpiece of thoughtful poetical composition on all aspects of life. It reveals a man of profound learning, wide experience and broad sympathies. The word "Thiru" attached to both his name and poem means "sacred"; Valluvar is the name of a class among the paraiyas honoured in the casteless society of ancient Tamildom; but degraded latterly by the imposition of caste from the North and the spread of Sanskrit culture and Brahminism, and by the establishment of Chathurvedimangalam (reserved settlement for learned Brahmins and their families) and by the organization of temple worship on the lines of ceremonial purity based on food and occupation. In the interim period before their complete segregation to the quarters of the untouchables, the Valluvars enjoyed an honoured position as Officers of State, who mounted on the back of elephants, proclaimed royal edicts. Even now though outcastes, they are respected as able astrologers and are consulted by all classes and communities.

The name of the poem "*Kural*" means anything short, and is derived from the metre of the poem — the shortest in the language — which is a couplet of four feet in the first line, and three in the second line. The Kural stanza is quite apposite to convey great truths in epigrams very often charged with poetic fire and illuminated by apt similies. Though a short treatise with only 2660 lines, its value is far-reaching because it has entered into the very soul of the Tamil people. It was to them what the English Bible was to the English Puritans and Pilgrim Fathers. It is the bed-rock of Tamil culture and character.

A. C. Paul Nadar B. A., B. L., is President, The Culture Society, and Kamban Kalagam, Tuticorin.

According to tradition Thiruvalluvar was born at Mylapore, now a part of Madras City, where a temple is dedicated to him. Madurai, the well known seat of the Tamil Academy, has equal claim in tradition as the place where he published his work. But nothing certain is known about his life and times. Several legends not all of them edifying or creditable, many of them contradictory to each other and devoid of any historical background, were invented at a later age to account for his greatness. The invention is due to the fact that the people of a later age could not reconcile themselves to the idea that a Valluvar branded as a low caste man could have been the author of such a noble work. (One legend gave him Brahmin — Pariah parentage) In the light of modern research, no legend relating to him can stand scrutiny. At this distance of time in the absence of any reliable data, it is difficult to fix his age even approximately. From the second century B. C. to the Sixth Century A. D. various dates are given by different scholars. A good majority of them are inclined to place him in the first or second century of the Christian era. The extent of Sanskrit influence and the use of particular words in Tamil are mainly the basis on which the date is sought to be fixed. But the difficulty is about the text. There has been no sound textual criticism to settle the text itself. Studies are not yet directed to trace the growth of ideas. In the absence of a reliable text, and history of ideas with the necessary background for developing them, it seems to be a hopeless task to fix his date.

As the text of *Thirukkural* now stands, it is eclectic in matter and artificial in arrangement. It is possible that all the verses are not his own : some he has adopted from the maxims and proverbs floating down the centuries as the abiding possessions of the people. It is also clear that some chapters and verses have been added to suit the ideas and sentiments of a later age when Sanskrit culture was gaining ground. The chapters on fate and instability of things are obviously drawn from Sanskrit sources. But even in re-editing, the underlying idea seems to have been to approximate as much as possible to the original frame work, as, for

instance, the chapters on asceticism deal with detachment but not with total renunciation by going out of the world. Even in spite of such approximation, there are some contradictions which are not easily reconcilable.

It is not known when the poem was divided into books, sections and chapters. One of the earliest commentators, Parimelalagar, is only of the 13th century after Christ. He gives the present arrangement with reasons for the order in which it is arranged. The reasons are, however, not always satisfactory. In some places they are strained and inappropriate and artificial. He is a great Sanskrit scholar and a votary of that language. He thinks that Thiruvalluvar borrowed lavishly from the *Code of Manu* for his book on virtue and Kautilya's *Arthasastra* for his book on wealth. This is obviously an error. There is nothing in common between Manu and Thiruvalluvar on virtue (அறம்). Manu treats the virtue of a man from the standpoint of his birth or his caste-calling. He treats of duties as varying according to a man's station in life. But the basic principle of Thiruvalluvar is that all men are born equal and that virtue is universal. The concept of Tamil அறம் (Arram) is different from that of Sanskrit Dharma. In the same manner Kautilya's politics is Machiavellian. Indeed, Kautilya's other name is Chanakya, which has given birth to a word in the Indian languages, namely, Chanakyam, which has acquired as much ill-odour as Machiavellism in Europe. On the other hand, Thiruvalluvar is moral to the core, in every aspect of life, whether it is politics, economics, or family life or any relationship between man and man. Parimelalagar's view has encouraged some modern scholars to say that Thiruvalluvar has borrowed from Vatsiyana's *Kamasastra* for his book on love. Now, Vatsiyana's *Kamasastra* is a science of sex and depicts the sexual life of his age about the beginning of the Christian era in the urban areas of Northern India not dissimilar to the debased sexual life in the Roman Empire which called forth the burning indignation of St. Paul. On the other hand, Thiruvalluvar's book on love depicts the Romance of a couple devoted to each other from first sight to the stage of family life, after union, and it is unrivalled for its purity and delicacy of feeling.

It is obvious that the *Thirukkural* has two sources—one based on Tamil culture, and the other on Sanskrit culture. It is not difficult to disentangle the original due to Tamil culture as distinct from what was derived from Sanskrit culture. In the first place, the language will indicate it. Ideas expressed in pure Tamil words will prove their origin. Next in importance are the nature of ideas. Broadly speaking, the early Tamils believed in world and life affirmation. Sanskrit literature, at least the post-vedic literature is the other way about; world and life negation. The ideas relating to fate, instability of life and cycle of birth are apparently of Northern origin. These are mostly due to historical and climatic causes. The waves of invasions pouring through the North-western Passes uprooted life in northern India and created a perpetual refugee problem. No wonder, people became pessimistic or other worldly. The cycle of birth became a nightmare. The law of Karma was at the centre of that thinking. This is the soil on which arose Jainism, Buddhism and Brahminism, though the Vedas disclose a simple casteless people devoted to joys of life.

The land of the Tamils is in the extreme South of the peninsula of India. Kerala, the land of the Malayalees, was an integral part of Tamilnad until the 10th century A.D. when it developed the language of Malayalam with a greater admixture of Sanskrit. Until the 16th century A.D. when the Portuguese invaded South India, there was no danger of naval invasions of Tamilnad, and it was well protected from the North until the 3rd century B.C. by the impenetrable forest of "Dhandakaranyam" of Ramayanam fame. But seas on three sides afforded facilities for Commerce and Trade to the Far East and the Western Asian and Mediterranean countries. The early Tamils were a trading and sea-faring people. There is evidence to show that they had contact with the Jews in the days of Solomon about a thousand years before Christ. The words used in the Bible for "Peacock" and "Sandalwood" are pure Tamil words "Thokai" and "Sandanam" respectively. The discovery of Malabar Teak in the ruins of "UR" of the Chaldees in Mesapotamia points to the

straight connection between South India and the coast of the Persian Gulf several centuries before Solomon. The word for "God" in Tamil namely "Kadavul" (கடவுள்) (that which is beyond the mind of man) and "Iraivan" (இறைவன்) (He who is) show a similarity to the semitic conception of Deity—the transcendant one God described as "I am that I am". The growth of moral ideas in the early Tamilnad has an affinity to that in China. There is considerable similarity between the ideas of Thiruvalluvar and Lao Tse. Kaviripoompattinam at the mouth of the Kaveri, Korkai at the mouth of the Thamiravarni, and Musiri at the mouth of the Periar, are the great ports which acted as clearing houses between the East and the West. According to Warmington, the Tamils acted as intermediaries in the trade between the East and the West. The land of the Tamils has an equable climate, salubrious in its effect on both mind and body and admirably calculated to nurture a fine race of people with simple life, noble thinking, and high endeavour. They had no tradition of divine revelation similar to that of the Jews ; nor were they possessed of a book like the *Rigveda* which became for all time the test of truth and standard of conduct for its followers. They developed their ideas from precedent to precedent, starting from the idea that the world and life were true and good. They found the world pleasant and not tragic. The cycle of birth was never a nightmare to them so as to drive them to find out a means of escape from it with trembling and fear. Their greatest problem was to achieve harmony in one's own life and in society. Early though they discovered moral consciousness, and they were able to discriminate good and evil and found out that every man has within his own mind and soul a scale and standard. To them everything that is good is an imperative duty (972, Kural). They evolved a system of ethical thought handed down as tradition from generation to generation. Their ideal men were "Shantor" (சான்றோர்) (literally meaning full men), and their ways and conduct called as "Shantorneri" (சான்றோர்நெறி—the path of perfect men.

Thiruvalluvar says "Great is the joy of the mother when a male child is born unto her : but greater far is her delight

when she heareth him called "Shantron" (சான்றோன்) Thiruvalluvar uses the word "shantor" eighteen times in the poem. His chapter 99 now appearing in the miscellaneous section of Book II on பொருள் (wealth) deals with "shantranmai சான்றாண்மை — the quality and character of "shantor." He describes the full men as persons to whom everything that is good is a duty (981). Their comeliness is a comeliness of character (982). Love to all, sensibility to shame, beneficence, benignant grace, and truthfulness—these five are the pillars to support their character (983). They abstain from scandalous speech (984). Humility is their armour against their foes (985). They are ready to acknowledge defeat at hands of men inferior to them whenever they find any merit in the latter. That is the touchstone of their fullness. What is the value of full men if they do not do good even to those that do them injury? (987). Even poverty is no disgrace to them (988). They will not swerve from the path of rectitude even if all else should change in a general convulsion. They are the very palladium of worth (989). Verily even the earth itself will not be able to support the burden of human life if the shantor fall from their worth (990).

The stanza 983 above referred to seems to afford a clue to the author's mind. He says that 1. "அன்புடைமை" Love to all; 2. "நாணுடைமை" Sensibility to shame. 3. "ஒப்புரவு" Benificence according to the nature and circumstances of any situation. 4. "கண்ணோட்டம்" Benignant grace and compassionate sympathy for all kinds or suffering. 5. "வாய்மை" Truthfulness, make up the character of the ideal men.

அன்புநா ணொப்புரவு கண்ணோட்டம் வாய்மையோ
டைந்துசால் பூன்றிய தூண்.

Now "அன்புடைமை" is dealt with in chapter 8 of the section on domestic virtue (இல்லறம்), in book I on virtue. (அறம்). "நாணுடைமை" is dealt with in chapter 102 in the Miscellaneous section in Book 2 on "பொருள்" (Wealth). But "ஒப்புரவு" that is beneficence according to nature and circumstances of any situation is treated in chapter 22 in the section on domestic virtue (இல்லறம்). "கண்ணோட்டம்" benignant grace and compassionate sympathy for all kinds of suffering

is the subject matter of the chapter 58 in the section on Politics (அரசியல்) in Book 2 on wealth (பொருள்). Truthfulness (வாய்மை) is relegated to chapter 30 in the section on Asceticism (துறவியல்) in Book 1 on virtue (அறம்). The treatment of these great virtues in the various books and sections unconnected with each other seems to suggest that the present arrangement is an artificial one and could not have been in accordance with the mind of the author in the original frame work. It is very possible that the present arrangement owes its origin to the change of values in a later age with the growth of Sanskrit influence and the Bhakti movement. The values of life certainly changed. From the 7th century A. D. onwards the Tamils became God-intoxicated and highly other worldly. The cycle of birth, the law of Karma and deep devotion to "Ishta Devas" (Gods of their choice like Siva and Vishnu) took possession of them. It seems to be that in this state of atmosphère the Kural was re-edited with the present arrangement wherein sections on Asceticism (துறவியல்) and on fate "ஊழ்" must have been added in accordance with the notions drawn from Sanskrit Culture. By that time Politics and economics had outgrown the original frame work. Hence a few more chapters should have been added to politics and economics treated in Book 2 on "பொருள்" (wealth). The ideas connected with "Amaichar" (அமைச்சர்). The councillor of the State or Minister suggest a later origin (Chap. 64). Chapter 70 "மன்னரைச் சேர்ந்து ஒழுகல்" (comporting oneself before princes) deals with tyrants or autocratic rulers of a later age. Chapter 92 "வரைவின் மகளிர்" (prostitutes) indicates the growth of harlotry and prostitution. Chapter 94 "சூது" (Gambling) seems to be a vice imported from the North. Chapter 72 "அவையறிதல்" and Chapter 73 "அவையஞ்சாமை" refer to the assembly of the learned but certainly not either to the King's council or village administrative committee as is well pointed out by Nilakanta Sastri. These two chapters ill-fit in the present arrangement where they are meant to serve the purpose of political or administrative councils. These matters require further research for a better understanding of the *Kural.*

Besides "சான்றாண்மை" (chap. 99) there are two other chapters dealing with the subject distinctly of Tamil Cultural Origin. One is "மானம்" (Honour) dealt with in chapter 97. Forbear from these things that would lower thee, even though they should be indispensable for the very preservation of thy life (961). Behold the men that desire to leave an honoured name behind them : they will not do that which is not right even for the sake of glory (962). Cultivate modesty in the day of prosperity : but in the day of thy decline hold fast thy dignity (963). Behold the men that have soiled a name that was honourable ; they are even as locks of hair that have been shaven off the head and thrown away (964). Even men who are grand as a mountain will look small, if they do an ignoble thing, though it should be only of the measure of the smallest seed (965). The deer (கவரிமான்) giveth up its life where it looseth its hair ; there are men who are sensitive and they put an end to their lives, when they cannot save their honour (969). Behold the men of honour who refuse to outlive their good name ; the world will join its hands and worship at the altar of their glory (970).

The other is "பெருமை" (Greatness) dealt with in chapter 98. An inspiration for noble achievement, that is what is called greatness (971). The manner of birth is the same for all men ; but their reputations vary because they differ in the lives that they lead (972).

Greatness can be maintained only by being true to one's own self (974). Greatness is ever unpretending and modest ; but bitterness vaunteth its merits before all the world (978). Greatness is gracious to all ; but bitterness is the very acme of insolence (979). Greatness is always for screening the infirmities of others ; but littleness will take nothing but scandal (980).

So far for the perfection of the individual ; but the individual can develop only in society. The great social virtue of "பண்புடைமை" is the crown of perfection. It is dealt with in chapter 100. The word "பண்புடைமை" is rendered by Beschi into Latin as *Bona indoles ingenuitas.* Graul translates it into German as *Boni mores; gute art.* Ariel finds

Courtoisie the French equivalent. Pope follows Ariel for the English rendering as *courtesy.* V. V. S. Ayyar prefers courteousness. Purnalingam Pillai thinks that "good nature" is better. But none of these great European languages has any equivalent word to express the sense in which it is used by Thiruvalluvar. It is really mingling of unaffected kindness with consummate tact. It is a combination of Love (அன்பு) as defined in chapter 8 and "அருள்" disinterested benevolence and graciousness as defined in chapter 25. The word "பண்புடைமை" is according to Pope derived from "பண்" (harmony) and harmonizes all things, while it is the result of a happy and harmonious combination of good qualities. According to Thiruvalluvar the men possessed of this virtue "பண்புடைமை" sustain the world—the world abides only because of them. Were it not for them it would fall to dust (996). Even though people are sharp in their wit as a file if they lack "பண்புடைமை" they are no better than wooden blocks (997). To him who knows not how to smile in kindly mirth (as the man of this quality would do). darkness in day time broods over all the vast and mighty earth (999).*

* The translations of the *Kural* verses are mostly taken from V. V. S. Aiyer's version.

Quotable Quotes

" The Tamil is the oldest and most influential of the Vernacular literatures of Southern India. This language, in structure and its vocabulary forms the best representative of cultivated Dravidian Speech. It has not feared to incorporate such philosophical, religious and abstract terms as it required from the Sanskrit. But its borrowings in this respect are the mere luxuries or delicacies of the language, and they have left unaffected its robust, native fabric."

SIR WILLIAM W. HUNTER

" Tamil can readily dispense with the greater part or the whole of its Sanskrit, and by dispensing with it, rises to a purer and more refined style."

DR. CALDWELL

"The Kural is the masterpiece of Tamil literature. One of the highest and purest expressions of human thought."

" That which, above all, is wonderful in the Kural is the fact that its author addresses himself without regard to castes, peoples or beliefs, to the whole community of mankind ; the fact that he formulates sovereign morality and absolute reason ; that he proclaims in their very essence, in their eternal abstractedness, virtue and truth ; that he presents, as it were in one group the highest laws of domestic and social life ; that he is equally perfect in thought, in language and in poetry in the austere meta-physical contemplation of the great mysteries of the Divine Nature as in the easy and graceful analysis of the tenderest emotions of the heart."

M. ARIEL

"Even Sanskrit literature with all its multiform development and its technical perfection of language, is not superior in the matter of philosophical and religious speculation on poetry to the highest examples of the art of Dravida—especially as exemplified in Thayumanavar and in such miraculous verses as the Ode to Sakthi and in the works of Thiruvalluvar, Nakkirar and Manikkavasagar.

SIR C. P. RAMASWAMY AIYER

"God permeates and vitalizes all things, has neither name nor form, is beyond speech and thought, time and space. This conception of the absolute is well brought out in the ordinary Tamil word for God (கடவுள்) Kadavul—meaning that which transcends (Kada) all things and is the heart (ul) of all things."

SIR P. ARUNACHALAM.

"The Silapadikaram bears evidence of Brahminical, Jain and Buddhist influence, though the core and spirit of it are certainly Tamil. It is remarkable that while Sanskrit heroes and heroines are mostly Brahmins and Kshatriyas, the hero and heroine here are Vaisyas and merchants. The Tamils always concerned themselves more with the common people and were more democratic in the real sense, than the Aryas who were obsessed with their fourfold caste system with its unpardonable preference for the first two castes, who monopolised almost everything great or good in this world or in the other world and even in the world of fiction."

A. S. P. AYYAR

"The Tamil temperament was optimistic, where as the Arya temperament was pessimistic with regard to the seen world. The Tamils of those days were not divided into rigid castes, but the Aryas were divided into four Varnas. The conventions of early Tamil poetry, were utterly different from those of Sanskrit poetry. Even after the beginning of the Christian Era, there was absolutely no intrusion of Sanskrit culture into the minds of Tamil poets."

P. T. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

Asoka and the spread of Buddhism in Cheranadu

DR. P. C. ALEXANDER, I.A.S.

THE HISTORY of the spread of Buddhism in Cheranadu is still obscure. It is not known clearly when and by what particular agency the religion of Sakiamuni got promulgated in this part of India. The evidence available in the scanty literature and inscriptions of the country throw little light on the origins of Buddhism. With the exception of a few recent converts there are no Buddhists in any part of the Chera country now, and so we do not come across even popular traditions and legends which may be helpful for our investigations. But one fact is clear. Whatever might have been the age and agency for the spread of Buddhism in Cheranadu, these could not have been quite different from those of her neighbours, the Pandia and Chola countries. The bonds of Cheranadu with the Pandia and Chola countries were so close that any religious or cultural movement which affected the latter was bound to have its reactions in Cheranadu also. *Tamilakam* constituted by the Chera, Pandia and Chola countries was one cultural entity and the political walls within *Tamilakam* were no barriers for the free action and interaction of cultural and religious ideas. Buddhism was one such religious movement which enveloped the entire *Tamilakam* and it would not be wrong to say that it spread in Cheranadu more or less by the same means and at the same time as it did in the Pandia and Chola countries.

It is a well accepted fact that it was the missionary zeal of Asoka and his efficient methods of organised propaganda that helped Buddhism to develop into a world religion. The steps taken by Asoka to propagate the law of Dharma and the names of the countries which came under his "Dharma

Vijaya" or moral conquest are described in his famous inscriptions. These inscriptions are the most reliable data for tracing the history of the spread of Buddhism in India and a critical study of them would show that like many other countries of India, Cheranadu also came under Buddhist influence through the religious propaganda of the Great Emperor.

Some scholars are disposed to think that Asoka had nothing to do with the origins of Buddhism in the Tamil countries. They argue that if Buddhism had been introduced into this region by the efforts of Asoka's missionaries there would have been some reference to this fact in the Literature of the country. But it is pointed out that even the *Manimekalai* a preeminently Buddhist work written for the actual glorification of Buddhism has not made any reference to Asoka. It is a fact that there is absolutely no reference to Asoka in the *Manimekalai* while there are many references to northern rulers and Saints. But the absence of any reference to Asoka in the *Manimekalai* cannot be accepted as a ground for the contention that South Indian Buddhism had nothing to do with Asoka. It must be remembered that the *Manimekalai* was composed many centuries after Asoka's time. In fact there is no occasion in the epic to refer to the history of the spread of Buddhism in the country. It has been pointed out that there are no South Indian traditions associated with the name of Asoka. But mention must be made here of the traditions about Asoka referred to by the Chinese traveller Ywan Chwang when he gives his account of "Malakuta". He speaks of the remains of an old monastery built by Mahendra on the eastern side of the capital and the tope built by Asoka to perpetuate the memory of the Buddha. Of course the monastery or the tope referred to by the pilgrim must be treated as fictitious. But it can be argued that the pilgrim would not have spoken of these with great show of accuracy if there had been absolutely no traditions connecting the name of Asoka with the country.

In the list of places to which Asoka is said to have sent missionaries for the propaganda of Buddhism, no mention is

made of Cheranadu or any of the Tamil countries and so it has been argued that the introduction of Buddhism in these places could not have been by Asoka's agents. The *Mahavamsa* gives the list of these places with the names of the "theras" sent to them respectively. In this list mention is made of "Vanavasa" (probably Banavasi) and of "Mahishamandala" (probably Mysore), but the names of no southern kingdoms are found. But here again, the absence of any mention of the Tamil countries in this list cannot be a sound argument in support of the theory that Buddhism was introduced into these countries by agencies other than those of Asoka.

Let us examine the famous edicts of Asoka and see what light they throw on this problem. There is only one Asokan edict which makes a direct reference to the Chera country and that is Rock Edict No. 2. It says[1] :—

"Everywhere within the dominion of His Sacred and Gracious Majesty the King and likewise among the frontages such as the Cholas, Pandiyas, the Satiyaputra, the *Keralaputra,* what is (known as) 'Tamraparni' the Greek King Antiochus and those kings too who are the neighbours of that Antiochus, everywhere have been instituted by His Sacred Majesty two kinds of medical treatment—medical treatment of man and medical treatment of beast. Medical herbs also, those wholesome for man and wholesome for beast have been caused to be imported and to be planted in all places wherever they did not exist. Roots also have been caused to be imported and to be planted everywhere wherever they did not exist. On the roads wells have been caused to be dug and trees caused to be planted for the enjoyment of man and beast."

Six copies of this edict have been discovered at different places in India. They are Girnar in the Junagarh State (Kathiawar), Kalsi, a town in the Dehra Dun District of the United Provinces, Sha bazagarhi, a village in the Peshawar District of the North-West Frontier Province, Mansehra in

---

(1) Mukkerji, *Asoka*, pp. 131-132.

the Hazara District if the North-West Frontier Province, Dhauli, a village in the Puri District of Orissa and Jaugada in the Ganjam District. But in the Dhauli and Jaugada edicts the words referring to Cheranadu are worn out. In the other four copies we find some differences in the usuage of the term referring to Cheranadu. In the Girnar edict[2] the term used is *Ketalaputo,* in the Kalsi edict[3] it is *Ketalaputo,* in the Shabazgarhi edict[4] it is *Keradaputro* and in the Mansehra edict[5] it is *Keralaputra.* But in the common English translations of the edict the term is generally put down as *Keralaputra.*

Keralaputra mentioned along with the Cholas and the Pandiyas undoubtedly refers to the Chera country. This edict says that the Emperor instituted hospitals for men and beasts everywhere within his dominion and also among the frontier countries like Cheranadu. Providing comforts for men and animals, planting trees on way sides, digging wells and other such things mentioned in this edict were important items on the programme of Buddhistic Propaganda pursued by the Emperor. Obviously the Chera country along with her neighbours, the Chola and Pandiya countries, were under the influence of the Buddhistic propaganda of Asoka. Otherwise he could not have made it one of the centres of his humanitarian activities which formed part of his religious propaganda. But there is a significant omission of *Keralaputra* in Asoka's Rock Edict No. 13 which gives the names of the countries where the Dharma prevailed. Rock Edict No. 13 says[6]:—

"Indeed His Sacred Majesty desires towards all living beings freedom from harm, restraint of passions, impartiality and cheerfulness. And what is Dharma Vijaya, moral conquest, is considered by his Sacred Majesty the principal conquest. And this has been repeatedly won by his Sacred Majesty

---

[2] Hultzsch, *The Inscriptions of Asoka,* pp. 2-3.
[3] *Ibid,* pp. 28-29.
[4] *Ibid,* p. 51.
[5] *Ibid,* p. 72.
[6] Mukkerji, *Asoka,* pp. 162-170.

both here (in his dominion) and among all the frontier peoples even to the extent of six hundred Jojanas where (are) the Yona King, Antiochus by name and beyond that Antiochus the four kingdoms named Ptolemy, Antigomas, Magas and Alexander ; below the Cholas, Pandiyas *as far as* Tamraparni. Likewise here in the King's dominions among the Gonas and Kambojas among the Nabhakas and Nathitis (Nathapanties) and Pitinikas, among the Andhra and Palindas, everywhere are people following the religious injunction of His Sacred Majesty".

Among the Kingdoms mentioned in Rock Edict No. 2 Satiyaputra and *Keralaputra* are not specifically mentioned in Rock Edict No. 13 and so it may be argued that Asoka did not introduce Buddhism in the Chera country. As we have already observed, Tamilakam was one cultural unit and it is impossible that Asoka's Dharma Vijaya would have stopped at the political frontiers of Chera Desa. If the Chola and Pandiya Kingdoms were under the influence of Asoka's propaganda, it is obvious that the Chera country also was. In fact a careful reading of Rock Edict No. 13 would show that the Chera territory was not actually omitted.

Referring to the Southern Kingdoms the edict says, "below, the Cholas, Pandiyas *as far as* Tamraparni". Tamraparni obviously refers to Ceylon. The expression "as far as Tamraparni" should be taken to include all countries of the south. Unfortunately in Mr. Vincent Smith's translation of the edict the expression "as far as" is not used. He uses the word 'and' which makes a different meaning. His translation of the passage is as follows[7] :—

"And this is the chiefest conquest in His Majesty's opinion—the conquest by the law of Piety ; this also is that effected by His Majesty both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues—even to where the Greek King named Antiochus dwells, and beyond that Antiochus to where dwell the four kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magas and Alexander—and in the south

[7] Smith, *Asoka*, pp. 131-132.

Kings of the Cholas and Pandiyas *and of* Ceylon." The expression "and" in his sentence would mean exclusion of the Cheranadu. But in the translation of Dr. Mukkerji which we have quoted above and the translations of Dr. Hultzsch[8] and of Mr. Bhandarkar[9] the phrase "as far as" is used and this is considered to be the correct translation also. When Asoka refers to the southern kingdoms he refers to the kingdoms of the Cholas, Pandiyas as far as Ceylon and so this should be taken as including the Chera country also, though a specific mention of the Chera country is not made in the edict.

We have no evidence to show that Buddhism in the Chera country was pre-Asokan. It is quite possible that Ceylonese missionaries must have visited the Tamil countries, and established monasteries and propagated the faith.

The famous monuments popularly called "Pancha Pandavamalai" in the Pandiya country which according to scholars are the oldest monuments of south India[10] have been proved to have been abodes of Buddhist monks in the 3rd century B.C. The general shape of these caverns and details of their formation have shown a close resemblance to the Buddhist caverns of Ceylon. It is also admitted that the script of the inscriptions on the rocks resembles in many respects the character of the Ceylon cave records of the same period. The reference in the *Mahavamsa* of the activities of Ceylonese monks abroad is also significant. The *Mahavamsa* says "The five principal Theras who had accompanied Mahinda from Jambudipa as well as those of whom Aritta was the principal and in like manner the thousands of sanctified priests, all natives of Lanka and inclusive of Sanghamitta the twelve Theras who came from Jambudipa and many

---

8 Hultzsch, *Inscriptions of Asoka*, p. 48.

9 Bhandeshkar, *Asoka*, p. 302.

10 For a critical study of these monuments, *vide* article entitled "The earliest monuments of the Pandiya country and their inscriptions" by Mr. K. V. Subramania Iyer in the Proceedings of the Oriental Conference 3rd session, pp. 275-300.

thousands of pious priestesses all natives of Lanka, all these profoundly learned and infinitely wise personages *having spread abroad* the light of the Vinaya and other branches of the faith in due course of nature at subsequent periods submitted to the lot of mortality". It would not be wrong to surmise that the first countries which the Ceylonese missionaries would have visited were the Tamil countries of South India. In fact in some of these inscriptions there is a specific reference *to 'Ila' or Ceylon*. It has also been suggested that Arittapatti in the Pandiya country was the settlement of the Ceylonese Apositte Aritta. But it has not been proved that these inscriptions and monuments and these missionary activities belong to the pre-Asokan period. It would be better if scholars would take up the history of missionary activities of the Ceylonese Buddhists in South India for a detailed study so that more light can be thrown on this subject. But from the scanty evidence available at present we cannot conclude that Ceylonese missionaries had visited the Tamil Kingdoms of South India even before Asoka's missionaries had commenced their missionary propaganda there. It is to the missionary activities of Asoka that we have to trace the beginning of Buddhism in the Chera country as in the Chola and Pandiya countries.

The Tamils Turn Sinhalese

NALLUR SWAMI GNANA PRAKASAR

THE Buddhistic chronicle *Mahavamsa*, often mentioned in this work, was composed in Pali verse about the sixth century A.D. The *Dipavamsa*, an older Pali chronicle was written about the fourth century A.D. The earlier part of these annals is mostly legendary with some kernel of fact to be ascertained by collation with other sources which are themselves very scanty. Many scholars have tried to make out a credible narrative of the antecedents of Vijaya the reputed Central Indian Conqueror of Ceylon, some five centuries before Christ. Various fairy tales are told about this shadowy personage. We give below an account put together by a Sinhalese writer Mr. John N. Seneveratna, F.R.H.S., in the Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register :

About 600 years before Christ, there was born to the king and queen of Bengal (in India) a daughter whom they named Suppadevi. When she was grown up the princess ran away from the Palace and, joining a caravan journeying to the Magadha country, reached the territory then known as Lala. Here the caravan was attacked by an outlaw or robber chief named Sinha who, taking Suppadevi as his prisoner, married her. Suppadevi in time gave birth to a son and daughter, Sinhabahu and Sinhasivali. When Sinhabahu was 16 years old he fled from his father's cave in the Lala forest, taking his mother and sister with him. Happening to meet on the way the Governor of the district a nephew of the king of Bengal, and therefore a cousin of Suppadevi, the fugitives were rescued by him and taken to the capital. Here he married Suppadevi and adopted the two children as his own. Meanwhile the robber Sinha, maddened by the disappearance of his wife and

This article is the second chapter of a hitherto unpublished book entitled "The Kings of Jaffna." The first chapter appeared in Vol. I. No. 1, of "*Tamil Culture*."

children, committed such excesses round about the country-side that the king of Bengal had it proclaimed that 3,000 pieces of money would be paid as reward to anyone bringing the outlaw's head. Sinhabahu, desirous of winning the reward, set out to kill his father (though his mother twice tried to prevent him), shot Sinha as he came running forward to embrace his son, and, severing the head from the body, brought it to the capital. When he arrived the king of Bengal was dead. The ministers, finding that Sinhabahu was an intrepid youth and was moreover the deceased Sovereign's grandson, offered the throne to him. Sinhabahu formally accepted it but soon handed it over to his step-father. Stricken by remorse for the slaying of his father, he returned to the country of Lala along with Sinhasivali, and there he built a city which he named Sinhapura after his father. In time he was crowned king of Lala with Sinhasivali as his queen. Many sons were born to these two in due course, the eldest of whom was named Vijaya, the second Sumitta. Vijaya proved to be an evil-conducted youth, so much so that his father was constrained to expel him from the country. Placing Vijaya and some 700 other Sinhalese (read companions) as wild and lawless as he, on board a ship, king Sinhabahu sent them forth upon the sea. They landed at Supparaka (now Sopara) on the west coast of India, but soon re-embarked and, setting sail, arrived in due course in Lanka, on the same day or year (it is said) as that on which Gautama Buddha died at Kusinara in India, *i.e.*, in B.C. 543.[1]

The *Mahavamsa* from which the above account was summarised states that the king of Vanga (Bengal) married the daughter of the king of Kalingas (Orissa) and Sinhabahu the grandson of the former built his new city called Sinhapura in the land of his birth.[2] Where Lala or Lada was is still disputed. But that Sinhapura was in Orissa seems to be almost certain. The Tamil epics *Silappatikaram* and *Manimekalai* written, probably, not later than Mahavamsa, speak of Sinhapuram as a "town in Kalinka-Nadu.[3] It should be

1. The Ceylon Antiquary & Literary Register Vol. IX, p.p. 3, 4.
2. Mahavamsa Ch. VI.
3. *Silap.* xxiii, 138-140. *Manimekalai* ixxvi, 15, 17.

noted that Kalinga was one of the earliest kingdoms established by Dravidian tribes in the Dekkan. Originally it covered Orissa and a part of Bengal. The *Ramayana* mentions it as one of the flourishing states of the Dekkan and the *Mahabharata* refers to Anga, Vanga and Kalinga as mlechcha, *i.e.*, Dravidian Kingdoms. Its ancient capital was Sri Kakola now corrupted into Chicacole. Buddhist writers also repeatedly mention Kalinga. The remote antiquity of Kalinga and its non-Aryan origin are facts admitted by all historians.

About Sinhapura Mudaliyar Rasanayagam's "Ancient Jaffna" has the following: "An insignificant town, by name Sinhapura, still exists in the Chicacole district of Ganjam Zilla in Orissa, and in all probability it is the site of the city built by the father of Vijaya, bereft now of all its ancient glory and importance. General Cunningham supposes that Sinhapura, the capital of Sinhabahu, the father of Vijaya, is the town of that name, situated 115 miles to the west of Ganjam, and at one time the capital of Kalinga. (Anc. Geo. p. 519). There are others who think that Sinhapura is the present village of Singur which is a station in the Tarakesvar branch of the East Indian Railway ten miles from Tarakeswara in the district of Hughli. This village is in the district of Rada which is the same as Lala or Lada. (Deg. J. Beng. B.R.A.S. New Series, Vol. vi, p. 624). This identification may be correct, for ancient Singur appears to have been of considerable size and importance and a flourishing commercial town on the old bank of the river Sarasvati. The followers of Vijaya were also called Gangetic settlers, and the descendants of those who settled in North Ceylon called themselves afterwards as of the Gangakula or Gangavamsa. No further proof is necessary to establish the fact that Sinhapura, founded by Vijaya's father, was a town in the ancient Kalinga, and not one in the far off Lada, the country of the Yadavas."[4]

To go back now to the Sinhalese writer from whom we extracted the summary about Vijaya's exploits. We remark that he brushes aside the traditional leonine ancestry of Vijaya

4. Ancient Jaffna.

altogether. Modern critics indeed find that the introduction of a lion into the legend was entirely due to folk-etymology. People without the historical knowledge that Sinhala is but a corruption of Si-hala or illustrious Ilam (Island) wanted to account for the word Sinha, (lion) which they thought was there. The additional syllable la was supposed to mean 'killer'. The story was then fabricated gradually that Vijaya the invader of Ceylon was the offspring of a lion killer. Sinha or lion in the legend is turned into Sinha the robber-chief in the above quotation. Brito in a note to his translation of the Yalpana Vaipava-malai has well thrashed out the question. We give some extracts from it below :

"The Sinhalese language is known also by the name of Elu, Hellu, Hela-div-bas, Sihela-bas, Sihala-bas and Siya-bas. These are not separate names but are various forms of one and the same word "Elu". Elu becomes Helu, Hela, Sri-hela, Sihela, Sihala, and Sinhala. These changes, as every student of oriental literature knows, are neither violent nor uncommon. But "Siya-bas" is somewhat difficult to account for. Siya from Siha is quite natural. The difficulty lies in the absence of the la which is in Sihala. It may be that when the forms Sinhala and Sihala had once suggested the Lion and the now national story of the destruction of the Lion, the destructive portion, supposed to be contained in, but in reality, suggested by, the word la, gradually passed away from notice and, the language became the lion's language (Siyabas), instead of the lion-destroyer's. Likewise the name Ilam, Silam, Seylam, Ceylon, Seyla-dib, Serendib, and Sinhaladiv are all adaptations of Elu to mean Elu-land. Now the questions arise of what origin is the word Elu ? and what does it mean ? The Elu or Sinhalese language (for there is no difference between the two) can return no satisfactory answer to these questions. The common assertion that Elu is derived from Sinhala is based on no scientific principles. The result of the inquiry is that we are driven to ascribe a foreign origin to the term Elu. That origin can be no other than the Tamil language, and the *Vaipava-malai* must be right when it says that the Island bore the Tamil name Ilam when Vijaya

colonised it and that Vijaya's followers took their name Sinhalese from the name of the Island. Ilam is a pure Tamil word and has no Aryan origin. The geographical situation of Ceylon renders it scarcely conceivable that the Tamils of India could have been ignorant of the existence of the Island before the Vijayan colonization. Sir William Jones is of opinion that the Island was "beyond the time of memory" inhabited by the Hindu race ; and he refers to the "languages, letters and old monuments of its various inhabitants" to support it. And Casie Chetty expresses the same opinion (Gazeteer p. 51) Mr. Clough, the author of the Sinhalese dictionary, thinks that Elu was the language of Lanka prior to the Sinhalese conquest. Bercolocci (p. p. 12. 18.) and Bennet (p. p. 212. 325), in their accounts of Ceylon, enumerate several facts which tend to shew that the Tamils of India knew and colonized Ceylon long anterior to the Vijayan conquest. The notices of Ceylon contained in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata favour the same view."[5]

Again the same writer remarks : "The term Sinhalese, according to Sinhalese histories, was invented by Vijaya and had a reference to the parentage of his father Sihabahu. The derivation is unmistakably a fancial one and the whole story of the rape of Suppadevi by a lion is an ingenious invention. The term Sinhalese does not appear to have been used by or with reference to Sihabahu on the continent: and it could not have been used without a suggestion of shame and degradation, if it really had any connexion with the destruction of the lion. The existence of such names as Sinhabahu and Sinha Nuwara carried no necessary proof of a leonine parentage, any more than Hastipura and Aswapura prove the existence of races sprung from elephants or horses. Nor can it be supposed that the pure Tamils of Ceylon invented the insulting term and applied it to the mixed race in order to distinguish themselves from that race. It had no reference to the lion, the lion-killer or the lion-born. It was derived, as the *Vaipavamalai* derives it and has been stated elsewhere,

5. Yalpana-Vaipava-malai p.p. xlvii, xlvii, xlix.

from the name by which the island was known at the time, namely Sinhalam."[6]

One could thus see that the name Sinhala is but a later form of the original Ilam combined with the qualificative Si (Sree) "illustrious." We have other names of important places qualified similarly, *e.g.* Si-Kali, Si-rangam *etc.* in India and probably Si-giriya in Ceylon despite its later connection with the lion. And have we not Sree Lanka itself which old Tamil name the State Council has lately decreed should be employed as the official name of our Island? Lanka like Ilam is from the same Tamil root and means "resplendent." In Telugu it is the ordinary word for an island.

Whom did the new form Sinhala designate? The same old inhabitants of Ceylon. The influx of some seven hundred central Indian fugitives effected no racial transformation as we shall see presently. The story of the Central Indians' alliances in Ceylon will be related by Mudlr. W. F. Gunawardhana, another Sinhalese writer of note, whom we have already quoted and will soon quote again.

"Vijaya" he says "allied himself with Kuvani, presumably a native princess with curly hair, as the name implies; and by her aid and the aid of his bravos, unexpectedly fell upon the chieftains of the Yakshas at a wedding feast and put them to the sword. He thus, by one stroke of treachery, made himself master of the Island and with the object of strengthening himself by a foreign alliance, cast off Kuveni, who had sacrificed her all for him, and sent an embassy soliciting a princess from the Court of Madhura, in the Kingdom of Pandya in Southern India. A princess duly came and with her seven hundred maidens of good birth as wives for her husband's followers and one thousand families of artisans, besides, as camp-followers in her train. All these settled in the land. Pandya was a Tamil country, and this new contingent was therefore Tamil."[7]

6. Ibid pp. lvi, lvii.

7. The Origin of Sinhalese Language p. 2.

We see that only seven hundred men from Central India formed the nucleus of a people later called Sinhalese. They made alliance with Dravidians from South India and merged gradually with the aboriginal Dravidians of Ceylon. Now, to what race did the new-comers belong ? Were they Aryans or were they Dravidians like those with whom they allied themselves ? Let us hear Mudaliyar Gunawardhana again :-

"History does prove that Vijaya Sinha who, with seven hundred followers, founded the Sinhalese nation, came from Sinha-pura (City of the Sinhas) the capital of a new principality in the kingdom of Kalinga, not far removed from the frontiers of South-Western Bengal. From the geographical situation given, it is reasonable to identify the principality with Sin Bhum (Land of the Sinhas) in Chutia Nagpur which, even at the present day, is a Dravidian cradle. Vijaya and his seven hundred married from Pandya in South India, another Dravidian country, from which the brides came with a large following. These two contingents, the one from the North, the other from the South, were thus both from Dravidian lands and history shows nothing inharmonious with the presumption that they were both Dravidian, and these two contingents were the dominant components in the nascent Sinhalese race. As a subordinate element was the native population, the Yakkhas and the Nagas, who, being aborigines, came under the general appellation of Dravidians. Thus, as far as history goes to show, all the component parts of the Sinhalese nation were Dravidian. The Aryan claim on behalf of the Sinhalese is an idea of recent date, originating from the lectures of Max Muller, based on imagination, and aided by the fact that the vocabulary of the Sinhalese language is to a very considerable extent Aryan. Vocabulary like the ideal in the case of the clock, is the surface view of a language ; and, in the case in hand, its Aryan complexion led to the conviction that the language in all respects is Aryan. From this to the conclusion with regard to race is but one step in a superficial process of reasoning."[8]

---

8. The Ceylon Antiquary & Literary Register Vol. VIII.

There has been much misunderstanding with regard to the race to which those who now speak the Sinhalese language belong. Dr. Mendis, a Sinhalese scholar himself, assures us that it does not follow that those who came from Central India "are necessarily the descendants of the original Indo-Europeans. Similarity of language is not sufficient evidence to establish a connection by blood. No one will try to prove that all the North Indians originally belonged to the same racial group because they all speak Aryan languages. The free use of English in Ceylon today shows not only that the language of a more progressive civilisation can grow at the expense of others which have not kept pace with the times, but also that those whose chief medium of expression is English need not be Englishmen."[9] The mistake is made by concluding from a similarity of language to connection by blood. As it is preferable to hear again a Sinhalese himself speaking on the subject of his race, we make no apology to quote a long extract from Mudaliyar Gunawardhana once more. He writes in 1924 :

"Some six years ago, a Young Men's Association in Colombo organized a course of lectures on Sinhalese Literature, and I was invited to open the course with a lecture on the Origin of the Sinhalese language. I accepted the honour, and as something new and striking of scientific value had to be said, I looked into the structure of the language for inspiration. My preconceived ideas at the time were those of the school of thought inspired by the writings of Max Muller, and I believed that the Sinhalese language and its speakers, the Sinhalese people, were Aryan. For one thing, the vocabulary of the language is, on the whole, of Aryan origin, and round that as a good mooring, all our Aryan ideas had found secure berth. But my scrutiny gave me a surprise. I found that some of the main features of Sinhalese grammer are quite out of tune with their Aryan analogues, while all principles of fundamental importance fully harmonize with their Tamil equivalents and fall in natural with Dravidian idiom. This forced on me the conclusion that the structural foundations of

9. The Early History of Ceylon by G. C. Mendis B. A., Ph. D. p.15.

the Sinhalese language are Dravidian, while its superstructure, *i.e.* the vocabulary, is Aryan. How was such a dual aspect to be accounted for? Turning to history, I found that the explanation is there writ large for those who could read. The Sinhalese are a composite race, with three elements in their composition, *viz.*, the aboriginal inhabitants (the Yaksas and Nagas) a Pandyan contingent which was Tamil, and Vijaya's contingent from North India, to which I gave the credit of being Aryan. This last idea was due to my thoughts still running on the theories of the school after Max Muller. I have since found it to be entirely wrong and discarded it. I drew the conclusion that by the intermixture of these three elements the Sinhalese nation arose, and with it the Sinhalese language, which evolved in homes where the mothers were Pandyan Tamils. and the fathers were North Indians using an Aryan speech, a form of Prakrit, which too was not unmixed with Dravidian idioms. In any case, it is plain that it is an intermixture of the tongues of these parents, the idiom of the mothers to which alone the mothers were accustomed will prevail as the one always heard in the household, and the nascent language will unconsciously, but none the less surely, be moulded on the idiom of the mothers, *i.e.* Tamil. The fathers may contribute to the vocabulary or supply the whole of it in time, but that will not affect the structure below, which formed itself on Tamil principles."[10] For a convincing proof of these assertions one should study his *Siddhanta Pariksanaya* from which this quotation is made.

The Sinhalese then are Dravidian in origin. The Tamils turned Sinhalese not indeed overnight but in the course of a few centuries. The new language created by the introduction of a superstructure of Indo-Aryan vocabulary would have sounded as a strange jargon at the beginning. It became settled, however, in course of time, the new words having been assimilated to the old Tamil dialect by giving them a twist conformable to it. As the influence of the new rulers

---

10. Siddhanta Pariksanaya, Introd. p. 12 - 13.

extended, the reformed language also spread among high and low by slow degrees. In the third century B. C. Buddhism brought an accession of Pali and Sanskrit words by the hundred and the thousand, words relating to monastic life and institution, to philosophy and the then known arts and sciences. The land began to be studded with Viharas and other religious buildings[11] and the yellow clad brotherhood was found in every nook and corner teaching the people under high royal patronage. No better means could have been devised to extend the knowledge of the new speech among the populace. Buddhism brought not only a vast amount of non-Dravidian words to enrich the nascent Sinhalese language but also the spiritual cement to weld the people together into a homogeneous society. All those who embraced Buddhism felt a sense of solidarity and community of religious interests. Caste and colour did not stand in the way. Birth and occupation mattered little. The solidarity created by the Dharma not less by a common language made the Sinhalese speaking Buddhists rally together as a nation. Those inhabitants who kept aloof from the progressive move were doomed to lag behind and eventually fall into barbarism. The Veddas of the present day are indeed said to be the descendants of those Yakkhas who opposed the Buddhist movement and, refusing to join the ranks of those who adhered to it, preferred the wild freedom of the forest.

In the north of the Island, it would seem that the old Tamils did not whole-heartedly embrace the new faith, although they had been carried away by the Sinhalese wave, speaking their own dialect with a new intonation and adopting the non-Dravidian element to the fullest extent. They spoke Sinhalese ; their land was full of Buddhistic monuments. As a people they were all Buddhists themselves. We know that Buddhism was not entirely a foreign religion. It

11. In the Jaffna peninsula many places are still known by names connected with Viharas. *e.g.* Culipuram for Sulu Vehera, Tolpuram for Tula Vehera, Cuddipuram for Sittiye Vehera & c. Other places are known simply as Veram for Vehera. Some lands are known as Poyiddi (Bo hittiya) Puttakaladdy, Putta Koyiladi, Cankattar vayal, *etc.*

was but the twin sister of Hinduism both having emanted from Brahmanism or more truly, Buddhism represented the views of a reformer who assailed the enslaving ritualism of Hinduism and directed his attention to right conduct alone. The sympathies of the people of the North with the old religion out-lived the reformation brought to Ceylon. They were, *moreover*, in constant communication with their brethren in South India. Their Naga temples did not cease to exist even under Buddhist ascendancy. The numerous Amman shrines of North Ceylon, resuscitated after the short spell of Portuguese rule here in later days, tell their own tale. On the other hand, Sinhalese sovereigns were remarkable for their tolerance of Hinduism and did not interfere overmuch with the beliefs of their northern subjects. And if we may believe the tradition handed down in the *Vaipava-malai* some old temples of Jaffna had existed from the time of Vijaya's conquest down to the Portuguese period. Similar stories are told about the antiquity of Tirukkonamalai, Tiruk-keticcuram and Munissuram. The last mentioned Hindu shrines of great celebrity would naturally have drawn throngs of pilgrims from South India to North Ceylon, as Rameswaram, undoubtedly a very old place of pilgrimage on the East coast of India, would have had its visitors from Nagadipa, with whose ancient kings the island of Rameswaram seems to have had some connexion from the earliest times. More communication with South India was kept up through a floating population of merchants and traders who took Ceylon products to the celebrated marts of South India such as Korkai, Kayal, Pukar and Musiri known so well to Phonenicians and other sea-faring people of the Mediterranean countries. Mantai and Kutirai-malai were busy ports of trade on the north-west coast of Nagadipa and it is very likely that the country around them never came fully under Sinhalese influence.

Some Dravidian loan-words in English

C. R. MYLERU, M.A.

THE STUDY of loan-words in a language is an extremely interesting and profitable branch of work, because it throws light on the civilization and the cultural and other contacts of the people whose language we study. Through the ages, the English language has borrowed freely from Celtic, Scandinavian, French, Greek, Latin, Italian, High and Low German, Russian, Turkish, Egyptian, Africaans, Persian, Hindi, Urdu, Chinese Japanese, Malay, the Australian tribal languages, and last but not the least, from the South Indian Dravidian languages.

In the matter of enriching the English language, trade has played a more important part than conquest or colonisation. "The merchant adventurer holds an important place in the history of the English language"[1] Usually new words first come into the spoken language and then they percolate into the written language also. Sometimes the reverse process also takes place. In some cases, it is seen that the same word is borrowed at different times repeatedly, *i.e.*, sometimes directly and sometimes also indirectly through some other language. For instance, many Indian and Far Eastern language words have come to English through Portuguese or Dutch, or French, because those peoples traded with the Eastern countries before the British. Similarly some Sanskrit words have come into English through Greek, Latin or Arabic, and again directly from Hindi or Urdu. After being adopted into the language,

---

C. R. Myleru, M.A., is Senior Lecturer in English, Annamalai University.

1 O. Jesperson : *Growth and Structure of the English Language.*

these words behave exactly like other ordinary English words in the matter of inflexion, conjugation, accentuation, etc.[2]

Most of the Dravidian words entered the English language only from the 16th century onwards, and now they have become quite good English words, and sometimes, even difficult to be recognised in their old South Indian forms.[3]

Now, we shall take up some of these borrowed words in detail :— These words are found and used in practically all important aspects of life. They have become so common that we are surprised when we learn that they have been borrowed from one or the other of our own South Indian languages.

I shall welcome you to read this article in the traditional South Indian fashion, by first offering you "betels" and "arecanut". Of course "betel" and "arecanut" remind us of the third requirement "chunam" and all these words are of Dravidian origin. They have been taken completely into the English language, and they are treated exactly like other pure English words as regards grammar and usage. The word "betel" travels into the English language *via* Portuguese, for they began trading with our part of the country earlier than the British. This is the case with many other Dravidian words ; they have gone into the English language through Portuguese, and through Dutch and French. The Portuguese word is "betel". Ultimately it comes from Malayalam "Vettila" and Tamil "Vetrilai" (வெற்றிலை). The word is used by many 15th and 16th century writers, from whom I shall give later a few examples.

Similarly the word "arecanut" comes from the Portuguese "areca" and from Malayalam "adakai". We can compare the Kannada form of the word "adakey" and even in Tamil there is an old form "adaikay" (அடைக்காய்) meaning "adai" (அடை); "cluster" 'kai' (காய்), 'fruits' or 'nuts'. 'Chunam' is from the Tamil word 'chunnambu' (சுண்ணாம்பு). And now for some of the sentences where these words are used by early writers :

2 O. Jesperson : *"Growth and structure of the English Language."*
3 H. Palmer : *" Principles of Language Study."*

R. Burton: "The Hindu will chew his betel and squirt the scarlet juice all over the floor."

W. Philips: "They 'the Hindus' do nothing but sit and chew leaves or herbs called "bettele" with chaulke and a fruit called "arequa".

Hakluyt: Great quantity of "archa" which fruit they eat with the leaf of a herb, which they call "*bettel*".

Purchas: The "arequa" maketh men almost drunk".

Of course in these examples, the curious reactions of strangers to our ancient and traditional habit is clear, and the reaction is funny to us now as it is also to Englishmen who have lived with us for a long time.[4]

In the sphere of victuals also we find that many familiar words are of South Indian origin. The word "rice" for example, the name of the staple food of millions in the East, is ultimately derived from the Tamil word "arisi" (அரிசி). Of course from Tamil it was borrowed by Greek, where it assumed the form "oruza." because the Greeks came into contact with the Tamils early, when they traded with the south. The Italians borrowed the word from the Greeks and it took the form "riso" in that language. From Italian it was borrowed into French and it became "ris" there. From France it crossed the British channel and went into the English language as "rice".

Similarly, the word "paddy" ultimately comes from a Dravidian language, through the Malay and Javanese languages. Those far-eastern languages like Malay, Javanese also borrowed some words from the South Indian languages, when the ancient Tamils traded with them, and when they had their empire in those regions. From those languages English borrowed some of these words, which could be ultimately traced to Dravidian origin. "Paddy" in Javanese is "Pari" and in Malay it is "Padi". Why do we say that the word is of Dravidian origin? In Kannada the word for

---

4 Hobson and Jobson by Yule and Burnell.

paddy is "batha" and in Telugu is "vaddlu." There must have been a form in the earliest Dravidian language which must have given the Malayan form "Padi." Archaeologists have come to the conclusion that South India is perhaps the most ancient part of the Earth's surface and people here were civilized and knew agriculture and the use of implements long before the people of other parts of the world. So it need not surprise us that the words for "paddy" and "rice" are of South Indian origin, because we were the first to grow and eat rice, which is the most easily digestible food in the world. The Hindi word for cooked rice "bath" also must have come from that Dravidian word.

The English word for pepper-water "mulligatawny" is borrowed from the Tamil word "milagutannir" (மிளகுதண்ணீர்) i.e. pepper water, i.e. "rasam." (ரசம்) Of course, it is natural for rice and "mulligatawny" to go together at table, and it is no wonder that they have been borrowed from the same source!

The modern English word "curry" is from the Tamil word "kari" (கறி) through French "cari" and Portuguese "caril"meaning a vegetable preparation. Of course, with the development of the culinary art, we have such dishes as "fish curry", "mutton curry". The word has become a first class English word and standard authors like Thackeray used it in their works. Thackeray says in one of his novels: "If you come to dinner, there is "curry"[5]

The names of some of the well-known varieties of fruits have also been taken from South India. "Mango", for example, comes from Tamil "mangai" (மாங்காய்) through Portuguese, where the word for it is "manga." We find this word in more or less the same form in all the four important Dravidian languages. Malayalam "mangai," Kannada "mavinakai," Telugu "mamudikai." Our part of the country was the first to grow mangoes in the world. The best varieties of the fruit are available only here; for example, the "Nedu-

5 *Hobson and Jobson* by Yule and Burnell.

chalai," (நெடுச்சாலை) variety of mango grown in the Salem district,

"Jack" fruit is nothing but our Malayalam "chakkai." It has gone into English through Portuguese where the word is "Jaca." So two out of our traditional "three fruits" (முக்கனிகள்) ('mango', 'jack' and 'plantain') have gone from South India.

"Ananas" *i.e.* pine apple is from our Tamil word "Annas." (அன்னாஸ்) It is found in more or less the same form in the Singhalese language also. It grows in abundance in South India, Ceylon and the Malay peninsula.

The word "Copra" comes from Portuguese and Spanish "Copra", which is ultimately derived from the Malayalam word "Koppara"; it is found in more or less the same form in the Tamil word "Kopparai" (கொப்பரை) and the Kannada word "Kobri."

The second part of the compound word "sugar candy" is from the second part of the Tamil word for it "Karkandu" (கற்கண்டு), "kandu" meaning a lump.

In the olden days we did not believe in patent medicines or pills or injections for the treatment of diseases. We used to cure all our ailments from the leaves of herbs, which are even now called "pachilai" (பச்சிலை) in Tamil. This word has given to the English language "patchouli."

There is another word "catechu" which has been defined in the Oxford Concise Dictionary as an astringent substance containing 40 to 50% of tannin, obtained from the bark of wood or fruits of various plants, used in medicine, tanning, dyeing, printing *etc.* This is also from the Tamil word 'kachu' (கச்சு) through Malay "kachu" meaning "bitter."

The word "cheroot" is the same as our Tamil word "shuruttu" (சுருட்டு); through French "cheroute" it has gone into the English language. Tiruchirapalli is, and has always been famous for its "cheroots."

Next we shall take up a word which refers to a kind of cloth. The word "calico" which means a kind of cotton cloth is of Dravidian origin. In fact, it is finally derived from "Kozhicod(e)" an important sea-side city of Malabar. In Malayalam it is "Kozhicodu"; the Arabs wrote it and pronounced it as "qualiqut"; in Mediaeval Latin it took the form of "Collicutta." It was "Qualecut" in Portuguese from where it came into English as "Calicut." The O. E. D. defines the word as follows :— "The kind of cloth (cotton) made in Calicut; many kinds of cotton cloth bleached and unbleached called "calico." And now for an early example of usage of the word in a book :

J. Robertson in his book "Spinster" writes :—A tawdry, pie-spotted, flabby, ragged, low priced thing called "callicoe" made by a parcel of Heathens and Pagans that worship the Devil and work on half penny a day."[6].

Then if we go into the sphere of dwellings and housing — accommodation, we find a lot of words in English which have been ultimately derived from the South Indian languages. The word "teak" for example, comes from Malayalam 'theka' (Cf) Tamil "thekku" (தேக்கு), through Portuguese "teca." Then the word "bamboo" comes from the Dravidian word "bambu" (Cf) Kannada "bambu" through Malay, Javanese "bambu" and Portuguese, Spanish and French "bambu"; (*Cf.*) also the Dutch form "bamboos."

Hakluyt writes : The houses are made of canes which they call "bamboos."[7]

The word "palmyra" for the variety of palm tree seen in plenty in South India is from our Tamil and Malayalam word "panamaram" (பனைமரம்). It comes into the English language through Portuguese where its form is "palmeira" the spelling having been apparently modified erroneously after "Palmyra" a city in Syria. The dictionaries say that the word is of Indian origin.

---

6 *Hobson and Jobson*, by Yule and Burnell.
7 *Hobson and Jobson*, by Yule and Burnell.

The word "choultry," a village rest house is from the Dravidian word "chavadi" (சாவடி) found in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam. The railway station in Salem district "Macdonald's choultry" is called "Makudan Chavadi" (மகுடஞ் சாவடி) in Tamil.

The word "godown" meaning a ware-house is from the Tamil word "gidangu" (கிடங்கு), also called "giddangi" (கிட்டங்கி) sometimes even now, through the Malay, language. As pointed out previously many Dravidian words were taken into Far-Eastern languages like Malay, Javanese because of the trade and cultural contacts that the Tamils had in ancient days with those countries.

"Pandal," built in front of marriage houses or for large gatherings is from the Tamil word "Pandal" (பந்தல்).

The word "balcony" meaning an upper window is derived from an Italian word "balcone"; the first part of this word "balco" is said to be from O. H. G. word "balcho" meaning a ridge; this is what is given in the O. E. D. But to my mind, the derivation seems to be unnatural and far-fetched. I suggest, subject to correction, that we can connect this word with our Tamil word "palakani" (பலகணி) meaning the upper window, and it might have been borrowed by the Europeans from us when they came into contact with us, for purpose of trade and commerce in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The word "bandy" is for instance, from the Telugu word "bandy" (Cf) Kannada "bandy" and Tamil and Malayalam "Vandi" (வண்டி).

In *A Handbook of British India* occurs the sentence: "A buggy being a one-horse vehicle, at Madras, they call it a bandy."[8]

For sailing in the sea along the East Coast, fishermen use the "cattamaran" which is from the Tamil word "kattu-maram" (கட்டுமரம்). It is useful for sailing long distances in the sea, and is never upset by even high waves in stormy

[8] *Hobson and Jobson*, by Yule and Burnell.

weather. This word "cattamaran" has a figurative sense also, and means a cross-grained person of whom others are afraid! Let us see some usages :—

The Blackwood Magazine : "He is the very cattamaran of oratory, when he explodes."

W. Collins : "That old cattamaran, of a maiden aunt of his.[9] . . . .

Then let us turn to trade and commerce and monetary transactions. The word "coir" is from Portuguese "cayro" and it is ultimately from the Malayalam word "kayar" (*Cf.*) Tamil "kayiru" (கயிறு). Of course it means the fibre produced by the cocoanut tree.

Forrest says in his book :—"The cocoanut tree produces coir."[10]

"Corundum" meaning "crystallised mineral of some species as sapphire, ruby etc." is from the Tamil word "kurundum" (குருந்தம்) which is largely used for preparing abrasives.

"Tootanague" meaning zinc, is from the Tamil word "thuttanagam" (துத்தநாகம்).

The word "cooly" meaning the worker on wages. is from The Tamil word "cooli" (கூலி), meaning the man who earns wages, for which idea also the same word is used. Some scholars think that it might be from the Guzerati word "koulli" meaning an aboriginal tribe ; but that has not been accepted by all linguists.

The coins used for monetary and commercial transactions were three : "cash", "fanam" and "pagoda".

"Cash" meant "coin of low value in East Indies. It is from Portuguese "cas" (*Cf.*) French "cas", Singhalese "casi" ; all these forms are ultimately derived from the Tamil or Malayalam word "kasu" (காசு).

---

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Ibid.*

Daupier writes :—The money changers sit in the markets with leaden money called "cash" which is generally given for small money in all these countries ; but, cash here is lead or tin (usually with a small hole in the middle).[11]

The word "fanam" is from the Tamil word "panam" (பணம்) ; 80 "cash" make one "fanam".

"Pagoda" was a gold coin, made up of 42 fanams, and it also meant a temple or sacred building in India and China, especially its sacred tower, usually pyramidal in shape. The gold coin called "pagoda" had on one of its sides the picture of temple tower. Now this word was also written "pagotha" "pogodo" and it is derived from the Portuguese word "pagodi". The dictionaries say that the Portuguese word is of Indian origin ; but the derivation suggested is rather curious and out of the way. Some scholars take it as coming from "but+kadah", meaning temple of idol. Some others say that it is from the Sanskrit word "bhagavat", meaning "holy"; others say that it is from "Bhagavati", meaning "Durga, a goddess". But all these derivations do not sound plausible. I suggest that the word 'pagoda' might be a corrupted form of our Indian word "gopura" by the "law of metathesis", according to which sounds and letters of a word might change places. Thus "gopura" became "pugora"; then "pagora", and then "pagoda". "r" became changed into "d" because in some Indian languages "r" is pronounced as "d" (soft). "Badoda" Baroda, "Nayar" Nayad.[11]

Finally, we shall take some miscellaneous words, which are greatly in use in English, and which also originate from one or the other of the Dravidian languages. The word 'peon' meaning "office-boy is from the Tamil word "payyan" (பையன்). Its correct pronunciation is "pian" and not "pun" as most of us say. The word "boy" in the sense of "bearer" or "servant" is from the Telugu word "boyi", according to some scholars. "Pariah" meaning an untouchable is from the Tamil word "parayan" (பறையன்), one who beats upon

11 *Hobson and Jobson* by Yule and Burnell.

the "parai" (பறை) or country drum. "Bandicoot" meaning a big-sized rat is from the Telugu word "Pandikokku". *J. Forbes*, writing about the East India warehouses on the Coromandel coast says :—"Bandicoot-rats frequently undermine ware-houses and destroy every kind of merchandise."[12] The word "Coromandel" by the by is from Tamil "Cholamandalam" (சோழமண்டலம்). "Canicopolly" is from the Tamil word "Kanakkupillai" (கணக்குப்பிள்ளை). "Ferringhee" or "Firinghee" is from Tamil and Kannada "Parangi" (பறங்கி). (*Cf.*) "Parangipettai" (பறங்கிப்பேட்டை meaning the place where Ferringhee or "white people" live. St. Thomas Mount is called "Parangimalai" (பறங்கிமலை) even now. "Poligar" is from Tamil word "Palayakkaran" (பாளையக்காரன்) or small chieftain. "Ramaswamy" (இராமசாமி) a common name among Tamil males has a figurative meaning also. It means "any Tom, Dick or Harry in Madras." It also means a twisted piece of cotton in a tube, made of silver for lighting cigars." "Pet" or "pettah" is from Tamil "pettai" (பேட்டை) meaning bazaar. Ayah is from the Tamil word "aya(h)" (ஆயா) through Portuguese "aia", Spanish "aya" and Italian "aja". An example of early usage is *Mrs. Sherwood's* sentence in a work, "'The ayah and her lady.' "Chit" or "chitti" is from the Tamil word "cheettu" (சீட்டு). "Tapal" meaning the mail is from the Telugu word "tappalu" which is singular in number. But some Telugu clerks of the East India Company, it appears, mistook it for the plural form because of the "u" ending and formed the singular "tapal" which has gone into English in that form. "Tom Tom" meaning beating the country drum and announcing something or the drum itself, is from the Tamil word "thambattam" (தம்பட்டம்). "Yercum" meaning an East Indian herb, and its fibre used medicinally is from Tamil "Erukkam" (எருக்கம்), a common plant in South India. "Chatty" is from Tamil "Chatti" (சட்டி) meaning earthern pot.

There are many other words like "anicut" (அணைக்கட்டு) "ayacut" (ஆயக்கட்டு) "maramath" (மராமத்து), etc., pertain-

12 *Hobson and Jobson*, by Yule and Burnell.

ing to engineering. They are from Tamil. Similarly "kummi" (கும்மி), "kolattam" (கோலாட்டம்) "Bharathanatyam" (பாதநாட்டியம்) pertaining to the dance art are from Tamil.

Thus, quite a number of words have gone into English from the Dravidian languages. A study of these words is very interesting and instructive for students of language and literature.

BOOKS CONSULTED

1. *The New English Dictionary* (Oxford).
2. *Hobson and Jobson*, by Yule and Burnell.
3. *The Sounds of English*, by H. Sweet.
4. *The Sounds of Spoken English*, by W. Ripman.
5. *Making of English*, by Bradley.
6. *Growth and Structure of English Language*, by O. Jesperson.
7. *Principles of Language Study*, by H. Palmer.

I request readers who may have come across other such words, to pass them on to me, for incorporation into my list of borrowed words. I intend compiling a book on this subject.

The Epic on the Anklet

MARGABANDHU SARMA, M.A.

THE *Cilappadhikaram* is the first epic in Tamil. It is, like the *Aenead* of Virgil, a literary epic. It was produced in an age of intense literary activity. The *Aenead* appeared in the Golden Age of Latin and the *Cilappadhikaram* at the end of the Golden Age of Tamil. It marks the culmination of the Age in which it was born. More than that, it also marks the culmination of a grand era in the History of Tamil Literature. All the poets of the pre-Cilappadhikaram period were keen observers of life and nature. They drew their inspiration from them, and indulged in imitating them directly. As the course of life in those distant ages was mainly guided by the environment in which man lived and as the scarcity of population was an indirect aid for prosperity, people of those ages looked upon munificient Nature with great reverence. This is the reason for the position of supreme importance which Nature holds in ancient Tamil poetry. The poets of old established the convention of depicting human actions, only as having been influenced by Nature. Thus the picture of a hill was described before representing the first meeting of lovers, and a desert was described before the separation of lovers was reported. Even the phases of a war were treated as having been influenced by the seasons of the year.

It is evident that the ancient Tamil poets firmly believed that Nature or the environment of man, more than his mind or will, shaped the course of his life. This must not be taken to mean that they were not aware of the difference between mind and matter. Leading simple lives free from wants or worries, they had no necessity to make Nature yield its treasures to them, and hence they allowed it to shape the course of their lives. Ilango-Adigal—the author of the *Cilappadhikaram*—thought that leading a pleasant life did not mean and was

not the same as leading a true life, and for the first time in the History of the Tamil People efficiently exploded in an epic the old belief and pointed out that both nature and the course of life were conditioned by some force which evaded the keenest observation. Being a Jain by conviction, he enunciated the suggestion that Fate—this is not a blind capricious force, but only the nemesis of one's own doings—played the part of the Invisible Power behind all phenomena. His teaching had such a great effect that all the poets of the post-Cilappadhikaram period, imagining themselves as following the lead of Ilango-Adigal—and this is no fault of the author of the *Cilappadhikaram*—abandoned observing life and Nature and instead turned towards folk-lore and mythology to inspire them.

Virgil had the benefit of studying Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* before he began to write his epic to celebrate the founding of Rome. They ought to have suggested to him the shape of his poem. Further, Aristotle's *Poetics* was a very valuable guide to him. Ilango-Adigal had no such models or guides before him when he decided to celebrate the apotheosis of Kannagi—the heroine of the *Cilappadhikaram*—in an epic poem. Many were the poets who flourished before his time, but none of them ever thought of writing an epic. The Tamil tradition of the pre-Cilappadhikaram period encouraged only the production of short poems. These poems fall under two broad divisions: (1) the Aham or amatory poetry, and (2) the Puram or war poetry. All the poems falling under the Aham class treat of love and are dramatic in nature: we have excellent specimens of Dramatic Monologues and Dramatic Stories. The Puram poems record victories, praise patrons or kings, or are didactic. Later these poems were collected to form Anthologies. Those who collected them were guided either by the length or the metre of the poems to include them in one or the other anthology.

The tradition of producing short poems was laboriously built up during many centuries. Therefore we must necessarily study them in order that we may get a clue to the

understanding of the genius of the Tamils. All the Aham poems are short stories, portraying just one or two incidents each. The incidents are presented as posing problems. That we possess more than two thousand such poems, of from four to thirty-one lines in length, all of them shedding light over a variety of subtle phases in the very short span of life between the first meeting of the lovers and the consummation of their marriages, leads us to the conclusion that the ancient Tamils exhibit a deep affection and an instinctive skill for brevity, beauty and simplicity. To work on a little piece of canvass, to put into it just one or two details in such a way as to exact an absorbing interest, to paint just more than one hue in order to exhibit variety than arrest attention, and to endow such a product with splendour by raising its level on the psychological plane without infringing on its physical simplicity was the aim of the pre-Cilappadhikaram poets. Ilango-Adigal was the first to depart from this tradition ; he has covered a whole life. Still, the tradition that was powerful enough to have found votaries in many generations of poets, had succeeded in making its mark on the *Cilappadhikaram*, too. Ilango-Adigal, by his bold departure, was able to raise himself to the sovereignty of exquisite model-makers. The story of the epic has only six incidents. By his skill and scholarship, Ilango-Adigal has transformed it into an epic of great magnitude. The magnitude of the epic is really very great judged from the standard of the Tamil tradition that was in vogue when the epic appeared.

Excepting the treatises on Grammar, the pre-Cilappadhikaram literature in Tamil does not possess even a single piece of work which would have taxed its author in the matter of its construction. The *Ten Idylls* and the *Paripadal* contain fairly long poems ; but they, too, are only prototypes of the short poems of the anthologies in respect of their theme and construction. Though a considerable body of literature belonging to the pre-Cilappadhikaram period is lost, there is no indication to believe that there might have been epics amongst them. From the names of such lost works, scholars pick out one, the *Thahadur Yathirai*, and surmise that it

might have been an epic of growth. It is believed that the book refers to the conquest of Thahadur, the modern Dharmapuri of the Salem District. Whatever may have been the nature of the work, it could not have been an epic for the simple reason that it would have been mentioned as such by the poets of old had it been an epic. The absence of any reference to it in the body of extant literature is enough proof of the fact that it could not have been a great work. Thus the task Ilango-Adigal undertook, when he decided to write an epic, was very great and also quite new. He had no models to copy, no traditions to follow, and no conventions to guide him. It is no doubt true that the absence of these mean an unfettered freedom for the author, but it is by no means an easy task to exercise that freedom and at the same time to produce a work which will receive the approval of scholars. Moderation may be a virtue for politicians, but it has no meaning for men of letters. A literary work either stands to inspire or dissolves into dust. An epic by its very nature must hold its supremacy at all times. It is true that novelty has its own attractions, but the very qualities that make it attractive are likely to be spurned upon as transgressing established tradition and upsetting orderly progress. Scholars are the boldest experimentalists and also the worst conservatives.

Ilango-Adigal decided to experiment, and it was good that he did so, not only for the furtherence of Tamil letters but also for the advancement of the knowledge of mankind. To embark on such a new venture and of such a magnitude calls for great courage, skill, scholarship and above all intuitive knowledge. His noble work amply testifies that he possessed all these and in a great measure, for the epic easily transcends the narrow limits of language and climate in its usefulness. He was to have guided the destinies of the Chera country; but he relinquished the claims to the throne in favour of his brother, Senguttuvan, and also renounced the world very early in his life. Could he have imagined that he was destined to reign over the realms of Tamil Letters and to command the appreciation and veneration of scholars of all ages?

The *Cilappadhikaram* is a turning point in the History of Tamil Literature. Never before did any poet ever think of writing an epic or as a matter of fact a piece of sustained work ; never after was any poet bold enough to produce anything except a sustained piece of work. The glorious achievements of the ancient poets and the grotesque failures of the later poets revolve around it. It stands as a Colossus representing the natural consummation of the traditions and culture of the early ages ; and unfortunately, it has again to be used as the yard-stick to measure the extent of degradation that the later poets fall into because of the compelling political conditions and the clash of religious beliefs. Immediately after its birth, the *Cilappadhikaram* took the literary world by a storm. The *Manimekalai*, which is generally known as the twin sister of the *Cilappadhikaram*, not only because of its form but also because its story is considered to be a continuation of that of the *Cilappadhikaram*, appeared soon after.

Sathanar, the author of the *Manimekalai*, was a great critic of his age. He was virtually in charge of either accepting or rejecting poems for the consideration of the Tamil Sangam—an association of men of letters like the French Literary Academy. He has contributed a few verses to the anthologies himself. The fact that he has not mentioned any patron or king either in any of his minor poems or in the *Manimekalai* is, together with the responsible position he held, enough proof of his high integrity and independence. That such a tried conservative amongst men of letters should not only approve of, but also follow the new tradition set up by the *Cilappadhikaram* by the production of a like poem, is eloquent proof of the greatness and excellence of the First Epic in Tamil. It is only too true that the *Cilappadhikaram* is also the First Epic of Tamil by virtue of its merit. More than that it possesses many qualities which entitle it to claim for itself the honour of being the most resplendent of the epics of the world.

The story of the *Cilappadhikaram* not only attracted a royal bard, but also involved the destinies of the three principal kingdoms of the Tamil People. The Kosa chieftain of Kongu Desa, the king of Malwa, and Gajabahu, the king of Ceylon attended the canonisation of Kannagi. All of them declared that they would also erect temples in honour of Kannagi in their respective countries and spread the Pathni-cult initiated by the brother of Ilango-Adigal, Senguttuvan. Thus we find that the entire people of The Tamil country and the neighbouring regions evinced a deep interest in the story of the epic and desired to follow the ideals it fostered. The author, besides being the brother of the reigning monarch of the Chera Country, was also a learned ascetic, revered by great scholars ; his catholicity was without a parallel. These, together with the stamp of approval of Sathanar, were responsible for the immediate popularity of the epic.

Ilango-Adigal was steeped in the knowledge of the traditions and conventions ruling in his time. He gave up the beaten track and explored a new avenue ; but he did not throw to the winds the rich legacy of tradition he inherited from his predecessors. Tamil Tradition was exacting in its differentiation of poetry into the Aham and the Puram classes. Every verse, barring Grammatical rules and ethical codes, must conform itself to either the Puram or the Aham class. The Puram verses can mention the names of those it praises, but the Aham verses cannot mention the names of lovers whose actions they portray. It was a convention that the number of persons represented in an Aham poem did not exceed three. In the face of such stringent conventions, Ilango-Adigal ventured to write an epic. Instead of analysing all, the departures of Ilango-Adigal from tradition, we can do well to note only two reforms he effected which encompass all his departures. By their very nature and length, the Puram and Aham poems of old were capable of representing only one or two incidents in the lives of men. Ilango-Adigal was the first poet to portray the full span of life of two lovers. Likewise, he was the first poet who did away with the exclusiveness of the divisions of poetry-*i.e.* Aham and Puram.

These two reforms allowed Ilango-Adigal the freedom to magnify his story, to accommodate many episodes in it, and also to incorporate a good deal of didactic material. As a compensation he embodied in his noble work, all that was best in the traditions built up laboriously during many centuries preceding him. Thus the five broad divisions of the Aham class of Poetry--Kurinji, Mullai, Marutham, Neithal and Palai — have each a canto allotted to it. In just manner the divisions of the Puram class of poetry are also fully treated in the last part of the epic. The poets of old had classified Tamil Literature under three heads: 1) Iyal *i.e.* Poetry; (2) Isai *i.e.* poetry which can be set to music; (3) Natakam *i.e.* Drama. We have excellent specimens of Isai-tamil interwoven in the epic; and the claims of Nataka-tamil are given ample justice, too. Thus, in short, this epic is an exquisite repository of the words, customs, tradition and culture, of the pre-Cilappadhikaram era. Therefore it is that the practice of producing short poems of either the Aham or the Puram class died out with the advent of the *Cilappadhikaram.*

The simplicity, beauty and charm of the Aham poems induced some of the post-Cilappadhikaram poets to revive their production; but they were not bold enough to put into practice what they ardently desired. The *Cilappadhikaram* had so established its hold that any poet who produced short poems would never have had the privilege of claiming a place as a poet. Hence such of those poets who genuinely felt like reviving the old tradition, invented the Kovai or the chain of verses in difference to the lead given by the Cilappadhikaram. The Kovai verses can, like the poems of the Aham class, stand apart independently; but the authors who wrote them were careful enough to see that their verses formed themselves into one natural and related unit. The Kovai starts with the depicting of the first meeting of a couple of lovers and traces the development of their love until its culmination in marriage, and ends with the depicting of a few phases of their married life. Similarly such of those post-Cilappadhikaram poets who felt like celebrating the victory of a general or a king invented the Parani.

The study of Psychology and Aesthetics had made great strides in the Tamil Nad, many centuries before the birth of the Cilappadhikaram. To the ancients the purpose of poetry was to appease the aesthetic cravings of men, and to enrich this pleasure the study of Psychology was encouraged. Ilango-Adigal widened the scope of poetry and amended the notion of the ancients. According to him poetry should not stop with appeasing the aesthetic cravings of men ; it should also appease their intellectual cravings. Since the latter was a new idea which he propounded, Ilango-Adigal laid greater stress on it. The second theory he propounded was that the teaching of philosophy while recounting a story was more powerful than teaching it as a science. That these two theories of his were unanimously approved of not only by his contemporary poets but also by the poets belonging to the later ages is amply borne out by the History of Tamil Literature after the advent of the *Cilappadhikaram.*

All the post-Cilappadhikaram poets have ardently followed the lead given by Ilango-Adigal, but they appear to have misunderstood him. This is the reason why their works do not hold such a high position as the *Cilappadhikaram.* The first misunderstanding is in respect of the purpose of poetry. Ilango-Adigal did not mean that appeasing of the aesthetic cravings of men by poetry was secondary to the appeasing of the intellectual cravings ; and he would never have accepted as poetry, a body of verses which failed to appeal to aesthetic tastes. In the Cilappadhikaram are incorporated the theology of many religions ; and while talking of any religion, Ilango-Adigal makes us feel that he must be a very devoted votary of that faith. Even in the treatment of the tenets of his religion, Jainism, he is extremely objective. The subjective element enters while Kannagi is represented as elevating herself to the level of a divine being, and there is no suggestion in the epic that any of the religions whose tenets have been expounded in it, has helped her to achieve that high status. Even Sathanar committed the blunder of supposing that Ilango-Adigal meant that religious education should be the aim of an epic. All the later poets have faithfully introduced religious theories in their works.

The second misunderstanding of the later poets is in respect of the teaching of philosophy. We have already noted that even Sathanar mistook Ilango-Adigal and felt that it is obligatory to teach religion in an epic. The author of the *Neelakesi* did not know the art of telling a story and he did not very much care about his ignorance. He was interested in spreading his religion, and here was a forerunner who advocated the teaching of religion through a story. It was a *pity* that Ilango-Adigal did not define to him what a story was. He called his work an epic and *Neelakesi,* his mouth-piece, went round from place to place to engage herself in religious debates. Surely, the author of the *Neelakesi* has carried out the master's behests ! Saint Manickavasagar was a very religious man and a missionary. He toured the whole of Tamil Nad and at every great Saivite Shrine he sang devotional songs in praise of the presiding deity. He was the last of the four Saivite Saints. Imagine him teaching religion and fostering devotion through a Kovai, for was it not the tradition to teach religion through a story and why should he not pursue his work in the approved manner. These illustrations go to prove Cilappadhikaram's hold over the poets who came after it.

Of all the literary languages of the world, whose origins lie beyond historical times, Tamil has this unique feature — and it shares it only with the Chinese — of still being current as a spoken language, without undergoing any change during all these centuries. In like manner, the *Cilappadhikaram* — it was produced in the latter part of the 2nd century A. D. *i.e.*, nearly two centuries after the first literary epic of the western world, the *Aenead* — has this rare distinction — and it shares it with no other epic in the world — of satisfying the tastes of the most modern of critics.

The Linguistic Area of Tamil Nad

K. RAMAMURTHY, M.A., M.Litt., L.T.

THE importance of regional study for the promotion of geographical knowledge in India has been stressed by eminent geographers. Prof. Ogilvie of the University of Edinburgh deplores the lack of detailed monographs on the various sub-regions of the vast sub-continent of India.[1] Arthur Geddes also complains that in South India, though there has been much talk of linguistic provinces, there has been no conscientious use of geographical method for discussing possible economic provinces, on the basis of regional study.[2]

As observed by Geddes, the need for regional study is specially acute in South India on account of the agitation for

---

These pages form the introduction to a thesis on *Some Aspects of the Regional Geography of Tamil Nad*, and are here reproduced by courtesy of the Editor, *The Indian Geographical Journal*.—EDITOR.

1. *The Technique of Regional Geography with special reference to India*, The Journal of the Madras Geographical Association, Vol. XIII, p. 110.

There have been, however, several detailed monographs in recent years, *viz.*,

(*i*) S. P. Chatterjee, *Le Plateau de Meghalaya* (Garo-Khasi-Jainta): Etude geographique dune de l'Inde ; Paris, 1936.

(*ii*) M. B. Pithawala, *A Geographical Analysis of the Lower Indus Basin* ; Karachi, 1936.

(*iii*) S. D. Pant, *The Social Economy of the Himalayans, based on a survey of the Kumaon Himalayas* ; London, 1938.

(*iv*) Radhakamal Mukerjee, *The Changing Face of Bengal* ; University of Calcutta, 1938.

(*v*) B. S. Sehagiri, *The Bombay Karnataka*, A Geographical Survey ; Belgaum, 1941.

(*vi*) George Kuriyan, *Studies in Kerala*, The Journal of the Madras Geographical Association, 1937,, 1938 ; The Indian Geographical Journal, 1942.

(*vii*) Kanangopal Bagchi, *The Ganges Delta* ; University of Calcutta, 1944.

2. *Dynamic Problems of Geographical Reconnaissance in India*, J.M.G.A., XIII, p. 57.

the linguistic provinces. This is the justification for choosing a linguistic unit as a geographical region of study. Kazi Saiduddin Ahmad has divided India into several politico-geographic regions and Tamilnad forms one of his regions.[3]

The choice of a linguistic unit for a regional study can also be justified by the close connection that exists between language and environment. While on the one hand language has had its influence on the cultural and economic development of the peoples of the various regions, the spread of language is also influenced by the topographical features of the country. In his preface to *The Frontiers of Language and Nationality in Europe,* published in 1917 just on the eve of the armistice, Mr. Leon Dominion says, "The language exerts a strong formative influence on nationality because words express thoughts and ideals. But underlying the currents of national feeling or of speech, is found the persistent action of land or geography, which like the recurrent motif of an operatic composition prevails from beginning to end of the orchestration and endows unity of theme. Upon these foundations, linguistic frontiers deserve recognition as the symbol of the divide between distinct sets of economic and social conditions."

However the region of Tamil Nadu (the country of the Tamils) though by nomenclature a linguistic region, has certain definite physical and climatic characteristics so that it may be described as a natural geographic region. It has a rhomboidal shape bordered by the ramparts of the Ghats, the Eastern and the Western on the north-western and the western sides and the Bay of Bengal on the eastern and the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar on the southeastern sides.

Traditional Limits

In Tamil literature, Tamilnad is said to have extended from Cape Comorin in the south to the Tirupati hills in the

---

3. *Politico-Regional Division of India,* I.G.J., XIX, p. 97.

north (Kumari Vengadam).[4 a-d] The place-name Nellore of Tamil origin[5] (Paddy village) indicates that the Tamil Region in the past might have extended even north of the Pulicat Lake. As regards the western limit, the ancient work *Silappadikaram* takes it to the Arabian Sea.[6] But *Nannool* composed in the 12th century A.D. defines it as extending up to Kudagam (Coorg).[7] The Malayalam language must have

---

(*a*) *வடவேங்கடம் தென்குமரியாயிடைத்*
தமிழ்கூறு நல்லுலகம்

(*Tolkappiyam*)

The Tamil language is spoken in the area, lying between the northern Vengadam and the southern Kumari.

(*b*) *வேங்கடம் குமரி தீம்புனற் பௌவமென்*
றிந்நான் கெல்லை தமிழது வழக்கே

(*Sikandiyar*)

The Tamil language is in vogue in the area having as its four limits, Vengadam, Kumari and the two seas.

(*c*) *நெடியோன் குன்றமும் தொடியோள் பௌவமும்*
தமிழ்வரம் பறுத்த தண் புனல் நாடு

(*Silappadikaram*)

The Hill of Tiruvikrama and the sea of the goddess Kumari are the two boundaries of the well watered Tamilnad.

(*d*) *நீலத் திரைக் கடலோரத்திலே—நின்று*
நித்தம் தவஞ்செய் குமரி யெல்லை—வட
மாலவன் குன்றம் இவற்றிடையே புகழ்
மண்டிக் கிடக்கும் தமிழ்நாடு

The Tamilnad of great reknown lies between the shore of the blue sea, where the goddess Kumari ever performs penance and the northern hill of the god Vishnu.

(*Bharatiyar*)

5. The name Nellore is exclusively Tamil. The Telugu equivalent for it namely *Vadluru*, and the Sanskrit equivalent *Vrihipuram* are unknown.

6 *குமரி வேங்கடம் குண குட கடலா*
மண்டிணி மருங்கிற் றண்டமிழ் வரைப்பில்

(*Silappadikaram*)

The Tamil land is bounded by Kumari, Vengadam, the Eastern and the Western seas.

7. *குண கடல் குமரி குடகம் வேங்கடம்*
எனு நான் கெல்லையினிருந்த தமிழ்க்கடல்

(*Nannool-Sirappayiram*)

The extensive area of Tamilnad is bounded by the Eastern sea, Kumari, Kudagam and Vengadam.

gained separate individuality by then to distinguish Kerala, where it now prevails, as a separate linguistic area.[8]

THE METHOD USED

There have been some movements of peoples in historic times as also political incursions on the part of potentates ruling different linguistic regions of those days. Tradition should not be the criterion in determining the exact limits of the Tamil Region of the present day. The present distribution of the Tamil language should be the main criterion for determining the limits. Accordingly, the limits of Tamilnad have been based upon the *Village Statistics* of the census of 1931.[9] These statistics contain information regarding the linguistic distribution of population only for those villages in which more than 10% of the population speak a language other than the main mother tongue spoken in the taluk as a whole. Villages in the border land (as found in the Survey of India one-inch sheets) were first plotted on a map (¼″ scale) and then the percentage of the Tamil speaking population was noted against each village. The 50% line was interpolated amongst these, the villages containing more than 50% Tamils being within this line and those containing less than 50% Tamils without.

It was found that except in the northern border and in a few parts of the western border, the transition from Tamils to non-Tamils is abrupt across the 50% linguistic line, which more or less corresponds to the escarpment of the Mysore Plateau or the crest of the Southern Ghats. In the north the transition from Tamil to Telugu is gradual, the villages there containing a mixed population.

The 50% line here is an arbitrary mathematical line following a zigzag path with the higher elevations on the Telugu side. This line behaves like a contour re-entrant going up along

---

8. B. M. Thirunaranan, Traditional Limits and Sub-divisions of the Tamil Region, *K. V. Rangaswamy Ayyangar Commemoration Volume*, p. 162.

9. Unfortunately the *Village Statistics* of the Census of 1941 do not give any detail about the linguistic distribution of the population.

the valleys of the rivers it crosses, *viz.*, Arani, Alikuli channel, Nagari, Nandiyar and Poini rivers. Along the valleys Arani, Nagari and Poini, there are a few preponderantly isolated Tamil villages even beyond the above dividing line.

Tamil-Telugu Dividing Line

From the above account, it is evident that the Tamil villages cluster along river valleys and the more favoured areas and avoid all higher slopes. It is probable that the stronger Tamil element has been able to displace the Telugu element in the better favoured river valleys and low ground.

As already indicated this 50% linguistic line is purely mathematical and cannot be entirely depended upon as a criterion for determining the limits of Tamilnad. The limits have therefore to be fixed by a line as close to the above purely linguistic line as possible and at the same time conforming to some definite physical boundaries. It is seen that such a line commences on the Pulicat lake, just north of Arambakkam village of the Ponneri Taluk, and runs westwards to join the Satyavedu ridge. From the Satyavedu ridge it runs to the Nagalapuram hills across the longitudinal valley between them following the water divide in the middle of the depression. From there it goes along the most southeasterly ridge of the Nagari group of hills and then along the Nagari Nose Mountains. Then it runs southwestwards along the crests of the line of foot-hills until it joins the Chittoor-North Arcot district boundary very near the crossing of that boundary by the Katpadi-Chittoor railway line. From there it runs westwards along the crests of the line of foot-hills and then in the forested escarpment of the Eastern Ghats which serves as the zone of separation between the Mysore Plateau and the Tamilnad plains.

Alternatives

It may be contended that the Tamil region should extend further north up to the Tirupati hills in conformity with the traditional limits extending from Kumari in the south to

Vengadam in the north. This has got some definite advantages from the physical point of view as it follows the escarpments of Tirupati and the Eastern Ghats. But south of the Tirupati escarpment is the important valley of Swarnamuki, which is preponderantly Telugu and is aspected more to the Telugu country than to the Tamil area further south. Further, the traditional boundary cutting across this valley from the Tirupati escarpment on the north to the Nagari hills in the south must be more or less arbitrary. Another boundary may also be thought of. This would be the water divide running east to west on the southern side of the Swarnamuki valley. This divide separates the valleys of the rivers flowing into the Telugu Region from those flowing into the Tamil Region. Though the Swarnamuki valley is excluded, there is still the area immediately south of this line, which is mostly Telugu.[10] This boundary is not superior to the boundary chosen even from the physical point of view.

WESTERN BOUNDARY LINE

The regional boundary, from the point where the districts of Chittoor, North Arcot and Salem meet, turns southwestwards along the eastern boundary of Hosur Taluk of the Salem District, following the edge of the Mysore plateau right through.

From the point where the districts of Chittoor, Salem and Mysore State meet, there is a low ridge running due south as far as the town of Krishnagiri. The purely 50% linguistic line follows the ridge to its southern extremity and then turns westwards crossing the Markandanadi valley to join the Hosur Taluk boundary. North of this line from the Krishnagiri town to the Hosur Taluk boundary along the valley of the Markandanadi exists a mixed population of Tamil, Telugu and Kanarese, the valley being accessible from the Mysore plateau.

---

10. The Villages in this area have a population which is anywhere between 60% to 100% Telugu speaking.

The Hosur Taluk of Salem district has 40% Telugu, 33% Kanarese and 21% Tamil. Telugu is adopted as the medium of instruction in the elementary schools of the Taluk. So the whole of the Hosur Taluk is left out of the region, but the Taluks of Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri and Omalur have been included within the limits.

The Kollegal taluk of Coimbatore District is mainly Kanarese and Tamilians form only a minor or negligible percentage of the population in all its villages. In the northern hilly region of the Bhavani and Gobichettipalayam Taluks, there are two villages only (Bargur 88% Kanarese, Hasnur 87% Kanarese) taken note of in the *Village Statistics.* So the linguistic frontier is taken along the water divide at the southern edge of the plateau up to Ramarkandi Malai. Crossing the Moyyar valley it follows the Nilgiris escarpment, which is the boundary between the Nilgiri and Coimbatore Districts. But the 50% linguistic line is pushed towards the plains as the Kanarese and Telugus have spread along the upper reaches of the Moyyar and Bhavani valleys from the plateau.

The Nilgiris is the most polyglot area in the Presidency. Not only do the Badagas, Todas, Kotas and Kurumbas each speak a tongue, which has been classified as a separate language or dialect but the plateau stands where three languages meet, the Tamil of Coimbatore, the Malayalam of Malabar and the Kanarese of Mysore.[11] The Tamils predominate only in the settlements of Coonoor, Wellington, Ketti and Ootacamund along the railway line and the plantation centres of

11. Nilgiris District Gazetteer, Vol. 1, p. 124.

Taluk.	*Percentage of Population with Tamil as Mother tongue.*	
	1931	1941
Tovala	99%	98%
Agastiswaram	90%	97%
Kalkulam	85%	85%
Vilavancode	75%	78%
Shencottah	95%	95%
Devikulam	87%	83%
Pirmede	54%	49%

Sholur, Hulikal and Melur. Elsewhere the population is non-Tamil. Hence the whole of Nilgiri plateau is left out.

From here onwards the eastern boundaries of Palghat, Cochin and Travancore represent the linguistic boundary but for two exceptions. Near the Shencottah gap, the ghats offer a better frontier than the political one both from the linguistic and physical points of view. Thus the habitable portions of Shencottah taluk of Travancore fall within the Tamil limits. In the extreme south of the Travancore State, the four Taluks of Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Tovala and Agastiswaram belong to the Tamil Region as the majority in them speak Tamil as their mother tongue. (See Table below).

From the above Table it would appear that there are two more taluks, Devikulam and Pirmede, the population of which is mainly Tamil speaking. But this represents only the migratory labourers on the plantations, who have their permanent homes in Tamilnad east of the Ghats and in South Travancore.

TAMILIANA–NEWS & NOTES

TAMIL STUDIES IN MALAYA

Singapore, April 10.

The University of Malaya has invited Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, Indian historian, to advise it on the creation of a Department of Tamil Studies.

Sir George V. Allen, Vice-Chancellor, told P.T.I. that Prof. Sastri was expected here shortly on a month's visit. He would discuss details of the project with Government, University and community spokesmen and make recommendations to the Court of the University.

Prof. Sastri's terms of reference will be the report of the Carr Saunders Commission which investigated Malayan education in 1947. The Commission has envisaged a department for Indian and Tamil studies in the University to provide for the third large section of Malaya's population.

The Commission desired a beginning with the study of Tamil language, Dravidian culture and South Indian history.

It said, "The University of Malaya is in an usually good position to become a centre of Oriental studies which would be incomplete if they did not include at least one of the Indian languages."

REWRITE HISTORY OF INDIA

Karaikudi, April 6.

The need for a critical study of history of the Tamils with a view to have a proper perspective of their ancient culture, was stressed by Dr. R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar, Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University, at a reception given to him yesterday by the Head of the Tiruvannamalai Adhinam Mutt, Kunnakudi, about 6 miles from here.

Sri Deivasigamani Arunachala Desika Swamigal, presenting him with a shawl, praised his services to religion and Tamil Literature.

Dr. Shanmukham Chettiar explained the greatness of Tamil civilisation, and said that history should be re-written beginning from the South instead of the North. Great orientalists, like Sir William Jones and Max Muller, about 150 years ago, had written Indian history from the materials furnished to them by the North Indian Sanskrit scholars, who had no knowledge of Tamil culture.

Dr. Shanmukham Chetti said that before the advent of Aryans, there was a culture existing already in the land, which was the Tamil culture.

TAMIL DRAMAS IN BOMBAY

Bombay, March 28.

It is rare in these days when the films hold sway everywhere to come across a really good play. The stage, however remains a force in the south owing to the persevering enthusiasm of one or two dramatic troupes who have stuck to the stage in spite of the fact that it has not at all been a paying proposition. The T.K.S. Brothers are on such group. Their best is "Auviyar", the story of Tamilnad's legendary poetess who is a by-word for wisdom and goodness. The T.K.S. Brothers are putting on boards five of their best dramas including "Auviyar" in Bombay in aid of the Bombay Tamil Sangham's Building Fund.

The Bombay Tamil Sangham in whose aid these dramas are being staged is a cultural association which has been trying its best to serve the cause of Tamil Literature in Bombay these twelve years. They run a library and a reading room and hold weekly meetings where young people are encouraged to exchange ideas as well as cultivate the art of public speaking. Classes in Tamil classics are also a weekly feature while festivals and "days" connected with the great names of Tamil Literature are celebrated every year. Prominent people of

South India whenever they come to Bombay make it a point of contacting Tamilians here through the Sangham.

AN EDITOR'S VIEWS ON HINDI

Speaking on Thursday, the Counsellor in Hyderabad, Mr. M. K. Vellodi, asked the promoters of Hindi to proceed cautiously in trying to spread that language. In tendering that advice he voiced the opinion of the South Indian public. Most people here are uninterested in Hindi, which is foreign to them. Nor has that language any great attraction as a source of knowledge. Though it presents valuable religious philosophical, and literary works, there are very few books in Hindi on science and various other branches of knowledge developed in modern times. Its usefulness in every day affair is very limited. That being so, the people are, naturally, slow in reconciling themselves to the article in the Constitution of India making Hindi the official language of the Union. Thinking people would have preferred a world language like English to take that place as it enables them to follow the best that is said and written in all countries.

If the Union must adopt an indigenous language, they would have chosen Sanskrit—written in a simple script, Roman—as the principal Indian languages have drawn from it and it is widely appreciated.

Hindi is hard to master. Mr. M. K. Vellodi emphasised that "the protagonists of Hindi should understand the difficulties of non-Hindi speaking people in learning that language." Though organised bodies have been systematically teaching Hindi in all parts of this State for over thirty years, Madrasis who are able to speak Hindi fluently, or write it lucidly are but a handful. Yet the difficulties of those who would learn Hindi are little understood by the Government of India. The latter has prescribed that language for examinations for the selection of candidates for the public services. It is introducing Hindi into various departments of the administration. All this places South Indians at a serious disadvantage.

—*Madras Mail,* April 15.

NEW EDITION OF KAMBAN'S WORKS

Karaikudi, April 7.

Presiding over the Kamban Festival, Karaikudi, which commenced here yesterday, Dr. R. K. Shanmukham Chettiar, Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University, said that the University had decided to undertake the publication of an authoritative text of *Kambaramayana* and that it was up to the learned men to extend their hand of co-operation in that endeavour.

Dr. Chettiar, in the course of his address congratulated the organisers of the Kazhagam on their efforts to celebrate the festival and bring home to the people the moral, didactic, artistic, and literary beauty of Kamban's masterpiece.

For many centuries Kamban was acknowledged as a great man of letters and it was but natural for the people to respect a great man when they discovered his intrinsic merit. Poet Bharati in his tribute to Kamban had stated that Tamilnad had become great by the birth of Kamban.

Continuing, Dr. Chettiar said that one important feature of *Kambaramayana* was the emphasis laid at every stage on the existence of God and the glorification of His greatness. This was one of the characteristics of every great classic.

Valmiki portrayed Rama as Nature's gentleman, while Kamban described him as God incarnate. People who made a historical approach to Ramayana often asked whether there was any truth in the story. That was not the proper approach and by that approach one could not evaluate and enjoy the riches lying open to the reader. In Kamban, the world had an epic which could challenge comparison with any other world epic. People denied it and said that it was after all a translation of Valmiki. To them he would reply that no poet was original and no genius could spin out something of a creative work out of nothing. Kamban had in his mind Valmiki and gave a vivid picture of Tamilnad. The story of *Ramayana* should have been current even before the time of Valmiki and it must have touched his imagination. When Kamban

found that the epic story was cherished by the people of Tamilnad, he produced the masterpiece. Though Kamban had his theme from Valmiki and though there were many things in common between the two, the former's handling of the situation was distinct.

Illustrating his point, the President said that in Kamba Ramayana, Viswamitra took Rama along with Lakshmana through the very streets of Mithila where Sita was standing in her bower and made Sita fall in love with Rama who himself fell in love with her at first sight. Here Kamban had given a rapturous description of Sita's beauty and the romanic effect it produced on Rama. This was Tamil culture pure and simple while in Valmiki's Ramayana both Rama and Sita were strangers until betrothal, which took place after Rama's breaking the bow. Kamban's adoration of Sita was so great that he could not bear Ravana touch her by her tuft at the time of his taking her away as was stated by Valmiki, but would only allow him to remove her with part of the earth on which she was treading. Yet Kamban's indebtedness to Valmiki was exhibited by his reference to the latter as "The True Poet" and "The Divine Poet".

Replying to the adverse criticisms made against Kambaramayanam Dr. Chettiar said that Kambaramayanam revealed that Kamban's love for Tamilnad, her people and her learned men was unbounded and that it was nothing but an act of ingratitude and foolishness to call him the "Slave of the Aryans".

Stressing the need for a critical study of Kambaramayana Dr. Chettiar said that no exhaustive study of the elusive beauty and subtlety of portraiture of character had been made so far either in Tamil or in English and that in this respect the publication by the Delhi Tamil Sangham "Mr. V. V. S. Aiyar's commentary on Kamban" was commendable and he hoped that more such publications would be brought out.

YEHUDI MENUHIN'S TRIBUTE TO SOUTH INDIAN MUSICIANS

Madras, April 3.

Interviewed by a representative of *The Hindu* this morning Mr. Menuhin said that before he came to Madras he had heard recitals by a number of musicians in the North. But after having heard music in South India, he felt that the climax had been reached. He made a special reference to Pandit Ravi Shanker's recital on the star and was tremendously impressed with the flexibility of the sitar wherein it was possible, he said, to have a wonderful quality of improvisation. The extraordinary thing about the sitar was the way in which it could be adjusted (including the removal of frets) to have desired effects. This was typical of the flexibility of Indian culture added Mr. Menuhin, " And here I heard your wonderful violinist Prof. Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu and also others." The concert arranged at the Central College of Karnataka Music at a high level, he said and added that he enjoyed the whole programme. He liked the way in which the young Gopalakrishnan played the violin on that day to the flute recital of Vidwan T. N. Swaminatha Pillai. Mr. Menuhin evinced keen interest in the flute and wondered "how one could play different notes in such a small instrument". The sliding effects shown on it were remarkable, he said.

Indian Violins

Speaking of Indian violins, Mr. Menuhin said that the extraordinary strength of Indian music was that it had been able to take a foreign instrument like the violin and make it so melodic. They in India had evolved a method of playing on this stringed instrument and made it 'their own'. By playing different scales and notes and producing that sound which was characteristic of Indian Music, they had made it a 'wonderful instrument.'

Prof. Dwaram Venkataswami Naidu who was present at the interview, pointed out that in India they had not been able to obtain really good violins whereas the existing ones,

he felt, were more like "match boxes." Mr. Menuhin replied that there were some good violins made in foreign countries which, he said, were of superb quality and of high craftsmanship. He believed that the purity of the tone and harmony should be kept up very high so as to enlighten the audience. In this connection, he appreciated the efforts taken in this country to maintain the purity of music and remarked, "I feel that music in India is still in the stage of the Garden of Eden and that no Eve has persuaded Adam to eat the apple" in the form of harmony.

Mr. Menuhin said that Indian music was essentially melodic and therefore it was not really necessary to have a violin of high quality and power. They tuned the strings in octaves which also added a certain amount of resonance and, gave sufficient quality. Their music never attempted to be powerful or loud. Hence they had to develop the violin according to their requirements. When a few locally made violins were shown to him, Mr. Menuhin remarked that an Antwerp craftsman had made a rounded form of violin without edges, so that the fingers could move more easily. It might be very well for a few Indian craftsmen to visit foreign countries and meet people making violins and study the details involved in the same. This was all the more necessary, he added, because the violin having become here what it is to-day, you should not be dependent on others".

Music of East and West

New Delhi, April 5.

Mr. Yehudi Menuhin, world famous violinist said in an interview here yesterday that an Indian audience was a wonderful audience for a Western musician.

He hoped that Indian music and western music would never regard each other as competitive. He suggested that there should be one institution in India where Western music was properly taught for those who were interested in it.

Referring to the difference between Indian and Western music, Mr. Menuhin said that in Indian music the complications of rhythm were more intellectual. The range of melody was smaller. Indian music was to a certain extent repetitive, but each time the inflections were a little different. In order to appreciate these inflections, one had to be very keen and awake and the perception required was greater than in the case of western music.

Western music on the other hand was more passionate and explosive and a listener could abandon himself and he carried on its passions and emotions. Western music had its intellectual content, but it could be appreciated even without intellectual appreciation.

An Indian audience was a wonderful audience because they were all ears and all eyes and they helped the performer. The Indian listener for instance inspired the performer by nodding his head in appreciation of something special. The western listener was more inclined to sit back, having paid the price of the ticket, to see what the musician could do.

Western audiences could not appreciate Indian music to the same extent as an Indian could appreciate western music. Indian music required more concentrated meditation, a more introspective element. It required an audience to forget about time and material achievements and a complete clearing of the mind. This was an attitude of mind difficult for a westerner. An Indian audience accustomed to appreciate the slightest inflections on the other hand provided a good audience for a western musician.

An Indian listener was like a person who could appreciate 20 different shades of blue and 20 different shades of red. The westerner was accustomed to an enormous painting with yellow, green, red and every other colour which completely dazzled him and carried him away.

Mr. Menuhin said he himself found great charm and fascination in Eastern music. But he added, " I have a part-Eastern background. My parents were born in Russia and so

I feel naturally attracted to the East, to India in particular. An ordinary Englishman or American who has lived in the West for generations would have to cultivate a special taste to appreciate Indian music.

While Indian classical music had always maintained its devotional character, the trend in Western music since the 18th century had been more and more liberation from established rigid forms. In the Middle ages, Western music was mainly church music very solemn and quiet and introspective. Then it became court music, in which the dominant note was courtesy and elegance. Later, it became the music of the man in the street, when this trend made Western music almost too common, there came impressionist music.

The lowest taste in music came with the sudden industrialisation and growth of a new rich commercial class without a proper cultural background. But with the establishment of schools and colleges, the building of public libraries, *etc.*, the standards also gradually improved.

Records of Carnatic Music

Paris, March 11.

A new catalogue of recorded classical and traditional Indian music has just been published by UNESCO in its series "Archives of Recorded Music."

The catalogue, a volume of 235 pages, has been issued in two language editions, English and French, and includes a list of more than 1,500 recordings issued by the Hindusthan, Megaphone Columbia and H. M. V., companies, as well as detailed information about the works and the recording musicians.

The author of the work is M. Alain Danielou, a French musicologist, who has lived for many years in Benares where he is known as Shiva Sharan. He has preceded the Catalogue itself with an introduction containing valuable material on the Indian musical system, scales, modes, styles, rhythms, musicians and instruments. There are, moreover, ten pages of

illustrations of the most frequently used instruments such as the sarode, the Veena, the sitar and the principal drums.

Without neglecting the folklore music of the Indians and of the aboriginal tribes and in addition to offering a selection of authentic Tibetan recordings, the catalogue devotes special attention to listing the best recordings of classical music instrumental or vocal — of Northern India (Hindustani Music) and of Southern India (Karnataka music). The works mentioned are almost all unknown in the West and the publication of this catalogue will therefore make the exacting and subtle art of the Indian musicians better known than it is at present.

North and South

Madras, May 5.

Mr. Shankarrao Deo, Secretary of the Sarvodaya Samaj, explained to pressmen here to-day the lines on which the Sarvodaya constructive programme would be carried out. The meeting was held at the Hindi Prachar Sabha, Thyagarayanagar.

Asked about the spread of common language and culture in relation to the Sarvodaya movement, Mr. Deo said that the proposal of the Government of India to convert Osmania University into a Hindi University would not make it a cultural centre. If the University were to be a cultural centre in the true sense for promoting closer cultural relationship between the North and South, it could not be so by making Hindi as the medium of instruction. They should provide not only for the learning of Hindi, but also for the languages of the South. It could not be one-way traffic from the North. In his personal opinion, the North had much more to learn from the South than the South from the North.

INDIA FROM THE DAWN

BY

M. RUTHNASWAMY

Price Rs. 12/-

Here are a few statements of this remarkable book :

"History in India begins in the south. It has begun in the south everywhere else in the world. in Europe, in America, in Asia."

"The south, therefore, is the more ancient land of India. It also contains the most ancient peoples of India."

"Nor were these ancient Dravidian peoples merely civilized and cultured. They were not lacking in the more manly military qualities. No people, not even the ancient Hebrews, prayed so fervently and frequently for the coveted success in battle as did the conquerors and settlers who eventually succeeded against them."

"The Tamils were the finest fruit of the life and history of the Dravidians, the first people, as we pointed out, of Indian history. Their kingdoms of the Pandyans and the Cholas were the greatest political expression of the genius of the Tamil race. The Tamils were superior in civilization to the contemporary Aryans. Trade and commerce flourished among them. From the earliest times they had traded with Arabia, Egypt, and Rome in the West, and with Malaya and China on the East. Their spices, ivory, and muslins were eagerly sought by the Argonauts of several nations. Roman gold, we hear the Romans complain, was passed into the Tamil country to buy the luxuries the Tamils produced, and Roman coins may still be discovered on the coasts of the Madras province."

THE INTERNATIONAL BOOK CENTRE,
TAMIL LITERATURE SOCIETY,
52, NEW COLONY,
TUTICORIN,
S. INDIA.

TAMIL CULTURE

Subscriptions, advertisements, and remittances should be addressed to: The Manager, Tamil Literature Society, 52, New Colony, Tuticorin, South India.

Remittance for a single copy may be sent in stamps. A single subscription is best paid by money order addressed to the Manager.

Cheques under Rs. 20 are usually not accepted, and cheques not drafted on a Tuticorin bank should be covered by a clearing commission.

V. P. P. charges are extra.

Subscriptions and remittances are also received at the following:

CEYLON: Colombo Book Centre,
20, Parsons Road,
Colombo.

Rates of Subscription (Annual)

India, Ceylon Burma, Malaya.	U. K.	U. S. A.
Rs. 5	8 sh.	1.50

Single copies: One rupee eight annas.

Literary communications, Exchange, and Books for review should be addressed to the Editor, "Tamil Culture", Tamil Literature Society, 52, New Colony, Tuticorin, South India.

To secure their return if not accepted, the Manuscripts offered for publication should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. The Editor does not take any responsibility for Manuscripts that may be lost. All literary communications should be typewritten.

The expression of individual views by Authors of signed articles does not imply editorial endorsement.

Printed at the De Nobili Press. Madurai.

Edited and Published by Xavier S. Thani Nayagam M.A.; M. Litt; S. T. D., Director, Tamil Literature Society, 52, New Colony, Tuticorin, South India.